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THE TIMES

No. 64,581 WEDNESDAY MARCH 3 1993 45p

£108m: the liquidator's bill so far for BCCI

By PATRICIA TEHAN

THE cost of winding up the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International SA is running at £600,000 a week, its liquidators have disclosed.

Fees and expenses paid to Touche Ross, the liquidator, in the 18 months since its appointment total £108 million, of which £82.1 million is fees.

Touche last night defended the size of its fees, saying the weekly figure had fallen from



£145 million a year ago. A spokesman agreed that the fees were "a very significant amount when viewed in isolation", but said they had to be considered in the light of the scale and nature of the bank's operations.

Touche has 450 staff working on the liquidation. The spokesman said that at the time of its appointment, BCCI SA employed 4,000 staff and had annual operating costs of US\$166 million (about £115m). "It is against this yardstick that our costs should be judged, as we could not simply suspend operations but needed to move quickly to secure the position

and to protect the bank's assets," he said.

BCCI SA comprised the bank's operations in England, Luxembourg, Scotland and the Isle of Man. The spokesman said Touche Ross continued to operate the bank's loan book, comprising 97,000 accounts, and had so far realised £311 million (£216 million) from this source.

The liquidator has also had to continue trade finance and treasury operations to close off open transactions and pursue amounts outstanding

from more than 600 correspondent banks. Liquidation activities also include the "investigation and pursuit of sums misappropriated from the bank, the handling of creditor claims against the bank, and the administration of approximately 27,000 payments which have already been made to depositors under the Deposit Protection Scheme and the Majority Shareholder Deposit Protection Scheme." The majority shareholder, scheme, controlled by the Abu Dhabi

authorities, ran until the bank officially went into liquidation in January 1992.

Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, yesterday agreed to meet a delegation of MPs, headed by Keith Vaz, Labour MP for Leicester East, to discuss the issue of compensation for BCCI creditors.

Mr Vaz has been a constant critic of Touche fees as well as the size of a partial compensation plan negotiated with the Abu Dhabi authorities.

Touche defensive, page 21

Britons were targeted and lured to join Texas sect

By RAY CLANCY

RELATIVES of Britons caught up in the armed siege at Waco, Texas, last night described how David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidian sect, lured people into joining his breakaway Christian group during a series of recruitment drives in cities and towns across Britain.

Last night, as US federal agents prepared to storm the heavily armed Mount Carmel compound, Mr Koresh apparently agreed to surrender. In a tape recording brought out of the compound by two FBI agents yesterday, the cult leader said he had agreed to come out "peacefully with all the people" as soon as the tape was aired on a local Houston radio station.

On the tape, Mr Koresh said he hoped it "would shed a better light with regard to my position".

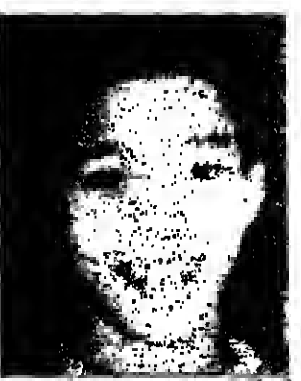
Six children were driven away yesterday, bringing to 16 the number of children Mr Koresh has allowed to leave since a fierce gun-battle erupted last Sunday leaving six people dead.

the names of 14 Britons believed to be connected with the Branch Davidian sect, but it could not be certain they were inside the compound. At one stage, it was feared that up to 50 Britons could be in danger.

Information in sparse letters sent to relatives in Britain suggest that Mr Koresh had planned the stand off with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

He instructed followers to gather at the ranch last summer. By August hundreds were living at the guarded compound.

Several British families have



Natalie Nobrega: one of the British hostages

been split by the sect. Mr Koresh and his supporters targeted members of the Seventh Day Adventist church and students, and held meetings in London, Manchester, Nottingham and Birmingham that lasted from dawn until dusk in a bid to persuade them to leave everything behind and join his community at the Mount Carmel ranch.

The meetings would start out as normal Bible classes but soon the leader in charge would launch into a monologue.

Continued on page 3, col 1

Clarke plans to lock up delinquents

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND RICHARD FORD

A NETWORK of detention centres for delinquent boys was heralded by Kenneth Clarke last night as the centrepiece of a new government strategy to tackle juvenile crime.

The hard core of 12- to 15-year olds who repeatedly defy the law will be detained for up to two years in "secure training centres", similar to the old approved schools. The government is also planning a raft of measures to deal with disruptive children and truants.

But the package unveiled by the home secretary and other ministers was immediately criticised by MPs on all sides, penal groups and some charities. Critics of the training centres said they would become colleges of crime, and Mr Clarke was also attacked for a panic reaction to the recent outcry. Some Tories felt he had not gone far enough.

Mr Clarke rejected calls for children under 12 to be included in the new regime, and it will not apply to girls.

Announcing the measures in the Commons, Mr Clarke said that for the sake of children and public, it was time to act. "It is not in the interests of school-age children that they should be left at large in the community if they are out of control, playing truant from school and repeatedly committing criminal acts against the general public."

Courts would be given power to impose secure training orders on boys who had been convicted of three imprisonable offences. Between forty and fifty would be held in each institution, which may be run by the public, voluntary or private sectors. "The children

will be put in secure accommodation, locked up and prevented from escaping. They will be made to go through a process of education; they will be trained. Many of them will receive more care and personal attention, and affection, than they receive in their own homes."

But Tony Blair, the shadow home secretary, questioned whether the units were needed. He welcomed the government's "belated" acceptance of responsibility for tackling crime after 14 years in office, and backed plans to improve care, education and training for young offenders in secure conditions. But Labour believed existing secure premises should be expanded. "It is far preferable to isolate young offenders from their own peer group, work with them to face them up to their responsibility



CHARITY PROTEST

Save the Children and six other charities, in a letter to *The Times* today, say the measures on young offenders have been rushed forward in an atmosphere of moral panic. "The urgent priority should be to restore hope and create opportunities."

Letters, page 15

ties and not put them in the company of forty or fifty other persistent young offenders. What we need, in other words, is schools of responsibility, not colleges of crime."

Mr Clarke was philosophical about the response, however, saying: "We are bound to face criticism from both sides - from people saying we should be locking up thousands of juvenile offenders and throwing away the key and others throwing up their hands and saying 'shock, horror, dreadful!'"

The home secretary had come under irresistible pressure to act after a catalogue of incidents involving young criminals, and the speed with which the programme has been brought forward was underlined last night by the disclosure that he has yet to determine the costs of the secure units, details on sentences and the extent of the need. Legislation will not be introduced until the next session of Parliament, and the new units are unlikely to be opened before 1995.

Besides the new secure units, Mr Clarke told the Commons that education authorities would be ordered to educate children excluded from school with courses tailored to their needs, and Eric Forth, the schools minister, announced an extra £1 million to counter truancy.

Other measures unveiled yesterday included:

- The police are to be advised against excessive use of cautioning.
- Social services departments are to be given new powers to impose sanctions on young offenders under their supervision who misbehave; and
- The five-month-old criminal justice act is to be reviewed to clarify courts' powers to take previous convictions into account.

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Leading article, and Letters, page 15



Royal welcome: the Princess of Wales, on a five-day visit to Nepal, is greeted by Crown Prince Dipendra. It is her first official trip abroad since her separation

station peak onto station

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Police fired on as they arrest bomb suspects

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

DETECTIVES from Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch were searching a house in north London last night for possible IRA bomb-making equipment after arresting two men. Shots were fired at police before the men were overpowered.

One of the men was examined for head injuries at Stoke Newington police station and was expected to be taken to hospital. The other suspect was due to be moved to high

security cells at Paddington Green, west London. The arrests were made after a secret operation involving police marksmen and anti-terrorist officers in a raid on the house in Walford Road, Stoke Newington. Streets near by were sealed off.

Scotland Yard was unable to confirm reports of the discovery of a bomb, or a possible bobby-trap. The London Ambulance service said that seven ambulances were at or near Walford Road because of the possibility that a device might be found.

Serbs shoot airdrop foragers

FROM BILA, FRONT IN KOSOVIA, AND ADAM LEBOR IN BELGRADE

SERB snipers were yesterday targeting Muslim foragers as they searched for the emergency food and medical aid parachuted into Cerska in eastern Bosnia by American transport planes.

According to one report the enclave had fallen after a ten-month siege. Amateur radio operators in the beleaguered region said that ten hamlets had been overrun during the morning in an offensive that began over the weekend.

A UN official last night accused Bosnian Serb commanders of breaching the Geneva convention by refusing to allow the evacuation of civilians and wounded fighters as heavy clashes raged around Cerska.

The official described the situation in the town as "vukovar revisited", a reference to the siege of the Croatian town last year.

The accusation came after UN officials in Belgrade said that General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander, Continued on page 2, col 7

RAF to dismiss many of its senior officers

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE RAF is expected to be forced to order compulsory redundancies in the next phase of manpower cuts. Two in every three officers above the rank of squadron leader are threatened with losing their jobs.

The second round, expected to be announced in June, threatens to be as controversial as the recent dismissals from the army. Under the government's *Options for Change* defence cuts, RAF manpower is to drop from 91,000 to 75,000 by 1995.

Hopes that the reductions could be met by natural wastage have been dashed because the normal annual turnover of officers and men has dropped. People are staying on because of the recession and the poor prospects of a good civilian job. The hardest hit rank is expected to be wing commanders, although group captains will also be vulnerable.

In the first phase, 969 personnel, 280 of them officers, were given redundancy but all were volunteers. Ministry of Defence officials admitted yesterday that difficult decisions would have to be made about the second round.

Reducing the RAF has been reduced because of the sudden drop in the annual turnover. About 6,500 recruits

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Touch of the whip reforms young delinquent Tories

Juvenile offending was our MPs' theme yesterday. The home secretary spoke of "secure training orders" and "supervision in the community". Even the prime minister denounced the erosion of discipline in modern Britain. He should know. Smirking behind him sat delinquents, juvenile and otherwise, who have wreaked havoc in his party.

There is glue-sniffing Bill Cash, fixated Euro-bore, eyes glazed with Maastricht's small print, "rat boy" Teddy Taylor, crouching in the ventilation shafts of amendment 443, and ram-raiding, treaty-smashing Tony Marlow.

And there are the joyriders: petty offenders such as young

Liam Fox, (C. Woodspring), working their way back to respectability. He and Alan Duncan (C. Rutland & Melton) were among new boys convicted of political joyriding after the Danish referendum last year.

They leapt into an anti-Maastricht resolution where they had no right to be, hijacked it, and drove it across several newspapers. Eventually they crashed. Fox is 32 and Duncan is 31. Hormones are a problem with young men at this age.

They crashed into the Law represented by chief whip Ryder and his menacing subordinates. Ryder, on orders, it is said, from the prime minister placed secure training



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

orders upon both of them, and some other new boys, too. They were to be incarcerated on the backbenches.

Despite their brains, none was to be allowed near a job in government. They were offered a discreet cold shoulder whenever they tried to be helpful.

Both tried yesterday. Duncan asked a powerful question, reminding the PM that Labour's spokesman Tony Blair had voted against reforms which toughened sentencing. Duncan was greeted by a huge

cheer hearts had softened towards the young offender.

But Major can be strangely unforgiving, and replied only "my hon friend makes his own point in his own way". Doubtless what the Americans call "tough love". Young Alan's supervision in the community continues.

Liam Fox may soon have paid his debt to society. If discipline is not instilled in the home, he said ruefully, the law steps in. Mr Major took pity and gave him a nice smile. A

whip made a note: "Parole soon", perhaps?

What, though, has been poor Ian Bruce's offence? During a question about students who drop out, the inoffensive ginger-haired youth (C. Dorset S) confessed to education secretary John Patten that "I only lasted six months at university".

Yes, snapped Patten to the MP, young people do drop out, "often as a result of making a wrong career choice". Bruce's pals sniggered. How does a chap please the front bench?

Labour new boy Derek Enright (Hemsworth) thought he knew. During discussion on the education bill, Enright

began to sing *Yellow Submarine* in Latin. Mercifully, Madam Speaker stopped him. She stopped almost everyone yesterday. She stopped Labour spokesman Tony Lloyd, in mid-question to Mr Patten, and told him to "be brisk". "I'll summarise," said Lloyd: "what's the government going to do about it?" — a fair summary of most speeches, which would reduce *Hansard* to inanity.

"Briskly, madam," replied Patten, "no, no."

Briskly, John Bowis (C. Bartsdale) asked for some assurances: "Yes, yes would do nicely," he said to Patten.

"Maybe, maybe," replied the minister. Miss Boothroyd beamed. This was more like it.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prescription charge rises 50p to £4.25

Prescription charges are to rise by 50p on April 1, from £3.75 to £4.25 — a 13.3 per cent increase (Jeremy Laurance writes). Dental charges are also to rise. Patients will pay 80 per cent of the total cost of treatment, up from 75 per cent, equivalent to an extra £1 on the current average payment for a course of treatment of £19.36. The maximum charge for a course of dental treatment will rise from £225 to £250.

The Labour party said that the increase was a scandal. David Blunkett, shadow health secretary, accused Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, of caving in to the Treasury. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society said that 40 per cent of the population was liable for the charge and said that the low-paid who were not exempt would be worst hit. Dr Brian Mawhinney, health minister, said four out of five prescriptions were dispensed free to people who were exempt from charges.

Schools advisers quit

The chairmen of the government's two main advisory bodies on schools are to stand down early so a successor can co-ordinate plans for testing and the national curriculum. Sir Ron Dearing, who chairs the Higher Education Funding Council for England, will take over both the National Curriculum Council and the School Examinations and Assessment Council next month. The appointment is intended to smooth the transition to a single organisation proposed in the education bill. Sir Ron, who left school at 16, oversaw the merging of the polytechnic and university funding councils, and has won considerable respect in the world of higher education.

Hatton acquitted

Derek Hatton, the former deputy leader of Liverpool City Council, and two other people were yesterday acquitted of one charge of conspiring to defraud the city council. Acquitted with Hatton on the direction of the judge at Mold Crown Court were Roy Stewart, a builder, and Hannah Folan, a former Liverpool city councillor. Mr Stewart, managing director of Rogerson's Developments, who faced only one charge, was discharged. Mr Hatton and Ms Folan face other charges. The trial continues.

Gasworks bomb remand

Three men appeared in court yesterday in connection with the IRA bombing of a gasworks at Warrington, Cheshire, and the shooting of a policeman. Páirc MacFhloinn, 39, from the Irish Republic, Denis Kinsella, 26, and John Kinsella, 48, from Nottingham, were remanded in custody until March 25 at Arbour Square magistrates' court, east London. MacFhloinn and Denis Kinsella were charged with attempted murder and kidnapping. All three were charged with conspiracy to cause explosions.

Bobby Moore funeral

Friends and former football colleagues of Bobby Moore respected the wishes of his family and stayed away from his funeral yesterday. About 50 relatives and close friends of the former England captain, who died last week, attended the service at Putney Vale Crematorium in south-west London. His widow, Stephanie, said: "We appreciate the good wishes of all our friends inside and outside football and are grateful they respected the family's wish for a private funeral. We will join with them at a memorial service in due course."

Nuclear ship blocked

Greenpeace protesters yesterday obstructed the docking of a ship that later took plutonium from Sellafield, Cumbria, to Sellafield, Cumbria. Police intervened to let steel baskets of plutonium nitrate from the Dounreay reprocessing plant be loaded on to the *Aberthaw Fisher*. AEA Technology, which runs Dounreay, said that it was the safest way to shift it.

Petrol killer sentenced

A man aged 18 who killed his 15-year-old friend by setting his clothes alight during a petrol-sniffing session was sentenced to a year at a young offenders' institution by Nottingham Crown Court yesterday. Shane Goostrey, of Clay Cross, Derbyshire, admitted the manslaughter of John Pickering. He told police: "I did it out of stupidity."

120 ferry jobs go

Sena Sealink is to make 129 people redundant on its ferry route from Stranraer, southwest Scotland, to Larne, Northern Ireland. The company said that the route was making a loss because of increased competition from P & O European Ferries, Norse Irish Ferries and Hoverspeed, with its Seacat service from Stranraer to Belfast.

Boy, 10, saves brother

A ten-year-old boy has been praised for saving his younger brother's life by clamping his hand over a wound in his neck, staunching the bleeding from a punctured jugular vein, until help arrived. Leslie Williams and Martin Kelly, six, were playing on a building site near their home in Bradford, West Yorkshire, when Martin tripped and fell on a jagged pipe.

Gaitskell correction

The late Hugh Gaitskell's papers, deposited in the library of University College, London, are bound by the terms of an agreement with Lady Gaitskell. There was not, as incorrectly reported (February 16) a decision, subsequently revoked, to open them this year. We apologise for the error.

Snipers pick off airdrop foragers

Continued from page 1

er, had blocked attempts to evacuate 1,500 wounded Muslims from the nearby village of Konjic. Police General Mavic had told the UN that the evacuation could proceed only if all combatants laid down their arms and the UN created a corridor for people to leave the area. Lyndall Sachs, spokeswoman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Belgrade, said the UN could not agree to such conditions.

"We are a humanitarian organisation and we should have unhindered access. These conditions contravene the Geneva convention," she said. "We know we cannot get access until the Serbs have finished their work."

Last night the US military, preparing to airdrop more emergency aid, said the number of planes used on the next mission would be increased from three to four. Andrei Kozmyev, the Russian foreign minister, announced that Russia was working on plans to join the airlift using Russian planes flying from Nato bases.

The Serbs have been using their heaviest artillery and mortars in the final assault on Cerska, which straddles the main supply route into eastern Bosnia. The Muslims are "hopelessly out-gunned", according to UN sources, many having only hunting rifles.

Relief workers were yesterday preparing for what one described as a human wave of refugees. According to some sources, tens of thousands of people could be expelled by the victorious Serbs before the weekend.

Russian businessmen found murdered in London penthouse

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE murder of two Russian brothers, believed to have been shot in the head at their £1 million penthouse flat, was being investigated by Scotland Yard detectives last night.

The men came from Chechnya, a mountainous area of the Caucasus in the south of Russia, which is seeking independence. They were working in London on producing passports, stamps and currency for the embryonic state.

Police believe that their death may have been the result of a business dispute and last night they were interviewing two men found at the flat, who come from

another republic within Russia.

The brothers, aged 35 and 40, came to Britain last year. In December the elder man bought the four-bedroom flat in Bickenhall Street, Marylebone, paying £1 million through a company he owned. He also used the company to buy a flat in Harrow, west London.

Each man was killed with three shots to the head. Police believe that the elder brother died last Thursday. His brother was away for some days and returned on Sunday. He was killed as he slept.

The murders were discovered after police were alerted

by delivery men. A double bed was delivered on Saturday. Two men at the flat asked the delivery men to take a large box to the house in Harrow, and followed in a car to the empty property. The box, which they said contained antiques, was placed in the garage.

One of the delivery men became suspicious on Monday and alerted Marylebone police. Detectives went to the Harrow address and found the body of the elder brother trussed up in a large box, which they believe was the one moved by the delivery men. Police kept the penthouse under surveillance and arrested two men as they went in that afternoon. A search of the flat revealed the body of second man in a bed in a locked bedroom.

Paul Jones, a workman at the flat, said yesterday that the brothers arrived three days before Christmas. "Their flat was one of the largest ones, a four-bedroom apartment. They had loads of money."

"They spent about £90,000 on the furniture; it took Harrods three days to deliver it. The sofa and chairs cost £20,000 alone." He said that the younger brother was a fitness enthusiast who had his own multi-gym installed.

The flat is in a mansion block in an area close to the West End, Baker Street and Harley Street, and has many foreign residents. A commissionaire said: "It is very cosmopolitan here. We have people from the Middle East, from Europe, from all over the world." He said the brothers were quiet and polite. "They were always very friendly. I didn't see anything about their behaviour that was at all suspicious."

The manager of the block, Terry Caplin, said three Russians had moved into the flat. Other residents had not made any complaints about them.

Mr Caplin said the penthouse was sold in December 1992 to an overseas company, which he believed was registered in Paraguay or Uruguay.

Assaults on police spur protest



Campaigner Norman Brennan wants better protection, including batons

Detective 'breaks ranks' to plead for better protection

By KATE ALDERSON

A POLICE officer who has been commended for bravery six times and suffered 16 assaults said yesterday that he was prepared to sacrifice his career for improved protection for police officers.

Det Con Norman Brennan, 31, of the British Transport Police, is to launch a one-man campaign for better protection for police officers. The introduction of a longer-handled baton, mandatory sentences for people who attack police officers and tougher sentences for criminals.

Mr Brennan, who works in north London, believes police officers do not have adequate protection. He has been

stabbed in the stomach and head while on duty, and spent time in intensive care as a result of his injuries. Forced to take sick leave, he has suffered from depression and stress which, he says, "is widespread in the force".

"I swore allegiance to the Queen when I joined this force, but now police officers are asking if it is really worth doing the job. We get assaulted and maimed every day of the week," he said.

"The police are still making arrests but they are wondering if it's worth going on. Perhaps I will lose my job by saying this, but if it means breaking ranks I will take the consequences. A lot of people on the ground feel the same way as I do, but they have wives, mortgages and children and are afraid to speak out."

"Violent crime is on the increase and all we are given is false promises and a pine-venetian blind. We need the resources to protect society."

"It's us, the police constables and the detective constables who are out there on the streets getting assaulted, attacked and sometimes killed, unable to do our job properly, while the home secretary, senior police officers and police management are tucked up in bed. I hope they can sleep with their consciences."

Bitter enmity that spawns violence

FROM ANATOL LIEVIN IN MOSCOW

THE mountainous Caucasian region of Chechnya, from where the two murdered men originated, is an autonomous republic of the Russian Federation, although it has been seeking independence for more than a year.

Chechen's demands have led to fears that other areas may also seek independence, causing the disintegration of Russia. Russian security agencies' involvement in the London murders cannot therefore be excluded.

However, no foreign state has recognised Chechnya, and in recent months President Yeltsin's hands-off policy has seemed to be working, as Chechnya has become bitterly divided between supporters of its fiery president, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, and of his parliamentary opponents.

The Chechens have in recent years spawned the most powerful of Russia's "mafia" groups.

In the impoverished Chechen capital of Grozny, an incongruous but common sight are the gleaming Western limousines of Chechen

"businessmen" from Moscow, who are suspected of financing General Dudayev's regime.

Mikhail Yegorov, the Russian deputy interior minister, said yesterday that Russian-organised criminal groups were increasingly smuggling drugs, precious metals, antiques and huge quantities of illegally-acquired raw materials to international contacts they had fostered.

General Yegorov said that the number of identified organised criminal groups has risen from 91 in 1991 to 174, and that they are active in 29 countries as well as throughout the former Soviet Union.



Academics tackle computer Babel

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

ACADEMICS from nine countries are to compile an electronic dictionary which will teach speaking computers how to pronounce nine million European names.

The Onomastica project, created by Edinburgh University's Centre for Speech Technology, will allow computers to translate names which twist even the best tongues at the BBC pronunciation department. At present a speaking

computer will pronounce the town of Reading in the same way as the present participle of the verb to read. By the end of the project it will pronounce Leicester as Lester. Strathaven as Straeven and Kirkcaldy as Kiroody.

Britain, Denmark, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain will each produce their own lexicon of a million place names, forenames, surnames, company names and product names.

The project, costing £2 mil-

lion, is part-funded by the European Commission and will take two years to complete.

The proper-name dictionaries will allow computers to replace humans in several industries. Mail order companies and telephone directory enquiry services will eventually be able to use computers to deal with most of their calls. The material may eventually be used for computerised weather forecasts and talking maps for travellers.

Leading article, page 15

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Britons released by Texan sect as 'God's marines' prepared for bloody showdown

Self-styled messiah who leads an army of murderous fanatics

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN WACO, TEXAS

FOR years David Koresh, the charismatic leader of the Branch Davidian cult, was plain Vernon Howell, an average unassuming boy from the backwoods who knocked around east Texas with a dog called Jet Fuel. He mended machinery, played his guitar and talked earnestly about religion.

His friends, family and former members of the cult he now heads say the old Howell is barely recognisable in Koresh, a self-styled messiah, leader of what he calls "God's marines" and the architect, so far, of the deaths of at least six people.

The list of accusations against Mr Koresh is reminiscent of another cult leader, the Rev. Jim Jones, who encouraged 907 of his followers to embrace martyrdom in the forests of Guyana in 1978.

Local newspapers in Waco, Texas, which have been investigating the cult at Mount Carmel for more than a year, say that the 33-year-old Mr Koresh has become a polygamous megalomaniac bully

A boy who spent hours praying and weeping by his bedside grew up to be a polygamous megalomaniac bully

with a taste for child sex who has turned the Branch Davidian from just another secretive Christian sect into a small, highly-trained army of murderous fanatics.

Mr Koresh's sense of mission and self-obsession, say those who know him, is deep and all-embracing. After Sunday's gun battle, he announced he was badly wounded in the stomach and leg and called his mother's answering machine to leave what sounded like a histrionic message of farewell. "They shot me," he said. "I'm dying, all right? I'll be back real soon, okay."

Other cult members have said by telephone that Mr Koresh is "doing well" and former members said his melodramatic taste for martyrdom is a central element in the character of a man who cannot bear to be other than the centre of attention. "Vernon was always saying he was sick

and near death," said Mark Breault, a former cult member. "He always complained about his stomach, saying he was in pain because of the people's sins."

Mr Koresh has fallen silent since Sunday when, with obvious relish, he gave a series of television and radio interviews to promote his millennialist message. Since then, federal hostage negotiating teams have been trying to piece together the character of a man as complex as he is dangerous.

Bonnie Haldeman, Mr Koresh's mother, described her son as a lonely, fervent Christian child who would spend hours praying alone. "I've seen him sitting by his bed, on his knees for hours, crying and praying," she said in a published interview yesterday. Mr Koresh has told his followers he was abused as a child.

His mother recalls his rage when older members of the local Seventh Day Adventist church refused to allow him to participate in services after he developed a romantic attachment to the minister's daughter. "It was mostly the coldness of the church he was in that affected him."

It was not until the mid-1980s, when he became leader of the Branch Davidian sect, an offshoot of the Adventists disavowed by that group, that his determination to follow his own religious rule became apparent and the transformation from Vernon Howell, the personable loner, was complete.

Two years ago, he changed his name to David Koresh, reflecting his new belief that he would father a House of David in Texas. Giving free rein to his bizarre religious theories, he claimed conjugal rights to his followers' wives. The illegitimate son of a carpenter, he began to claim he was the messiah. "He has



Death camp: the scene of the shoot-out and, top, David Koresh, pictured six years ago with his wife and son



Safe: Nahara and Renee Fagan have been freed

Britons targeted and lured to Texas

Continued from page 1

logue and use amateur brainwashing techniques on would-be followers. No questions were allowed and there were usually guitar playing sessions.

Winston Nobrega, 50, of north London, whose wife Teresa, 48, and daughter Natalie, 11, joined the group, said their last letter had described how they were pre-

paring for Armageddon. He visited the ranch last November to persuade his family to come home. "It seemed like a holiday camp. Natalie was so happy, and there were lots of other children of her own age to join in games."

Yesterday was his daughter's birthday. He does not know if she is one of the children already released. "I am frantic. Anybody else faced

with guns and tanks would have given up by now. What chance has my daughter got? Bullets don't differentiate between children and adults."

One of the biggest recruitment drives was in Nottingham, where James McNeil, of the Seventh Day Adventist church, said a number of former members travelled to the US last July. "They believed they were going to fight

in Jerusalem, and that they had to protect themselves from infidels, that is why they armed themselves."

Winston Blake, 28, was also recruited in Nottingham. His brother-in-law, Paul Hansen, said: "I realised their leader was a madman and I refused to join. He has mesmerised them, he is Jesus and only he can save them."

Robyn Burdett, a former cult follower, told *The Dallas Morning News*: "He was really nice. He was humble. He was very well mannered... He's become this obnoxious, foul-mouthed, pushy person."

Stockpiling weapons as a licensed gun dealer, organising paramilitary manoeuvres in the fields around Mount Carmel and schooling his followers to anticipate death in a shoot-out with the authorities, Mr Koresh simultaneously tightened his hold on the minds of his disciples and prepared them for the bloody confrontation that erupted last weekend. With a preaching style alternately ranting, wheedling and cajoling, he told his followers that they would die as martyrs, spend time in heaven and then return to earth to exact vengeance on the unbelievers.

Largely cut off from the outside world and enthralled to his bullying personality, many believed him. More than a year ago, he gave an interview to an Australian television station which now sounds eerily prophetic. "If they come in here shooting, what would you expect us to do?" he asked calmly, raising his hand in the shape of a pistol. "This is America. Be realistic."

interview to an Australian television station which now sounds eerily prophetic. "If they come in here shooting, what would you expect us to do?" he asked calmly, raising his hand in the shape of a pistol. "This is America. Be realistic."

Britons lured, page 1

Tell John Major what you think about Britain today

BRITAIN — WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S RIGHT? WHAT'S NEXT? This is the subject of the current Channel 4 series *Opinions*. The series will end with a televised public forum, held in association with *The Times*, at Central Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday March 24, starting at 7.30pm. The meeting will be broadcast on Channel 4 on Sunday March 28, the eve of John Major's 50th birthday.

Speakers will include Alan Clark, the historian, former Defence Minister and first contributor to the series. Other participants will include the radical lawyer Michael Mansfield QC, Sheila McKechnie of Shepher, Michael Winnes, the film director, and Professor Paul Kennedy, the author of *Preparing for the Twenty-First Century*.

If you would like to attend, please phone the 24-hour credit card hotline 071-344 4444, or complete and return the coupon below with your remittance. Tickets cost £10 (concessions £5) plus £1 postage.

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Fiancé weeps as he tells of murder victim's abortion

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE fiancé of the murdered bank clerk Alison Marward broke down at the Old Bailey yesterday when he was questioned about an abortion she had two years after they met.

Gordon Healis, 32, a hospital porter, was comforted at the back of the court by Alison's brother Mark and ushers after his evidence was adjourned on the fifth day of the trial of Benjamin Ekow Laing for murder.

Mr Healis, 32, said Alison had concealed the termination of her pregnancy in 1988 from her family and only he and a friend of hers knew about it. The prosecution claims that Mr Laing also got to know of the abortion by torturing her and forcing her to reveal intimate details before he strangled her at her home in Barking, east London, on April 23 last year. He then allegedly used the information to keep up the pretence that Alison, 24, and her father Matthew Marward, 62, had unexpectedly gone away.

The court has been told that Mr Laing typed a letter to Mark Marward, purporting to come from Alison, in which she said they needed time away together because she was upset about the abortion and her father was still distressed by the death of his wife from cancer in 1987.

Police initially believed the two had been kidnapped and intercepted the letter as it was being delivered on April 30, a week after the murders.

Mr Laing, 25, a Selfridges delivery driver who denies the

double murder, allegedly shot Mr Marward, a retired bank messenger, and strangled Alison so that he could steal a car belonging to Mark Marward which had been advertised in a local newspaper. He is alleged to have dismembered the bodies and buried the remains in the garden of his girl friend's house.

Mr Healis, who came to Britain from Guyana in 1982, told the court that he met Alison in 1986 at Newham general hospital, east London, where she then worked in the x-ray department. They announced their engagement in May, 1991.

On the evening of the murders the couple visited a house they were buying in Ilford, northeast London, and parted at 11.30pm. They never saw each other again. The following day, Mr Healis planned to deliver a table to the new home with the help of Mr Marward but there was no answer at the house. On Saturday April 25 he went back and unexpectedly met Alison's uncle Derek Marward. They broke in and found a note on a hall table which appeared to have been written by Alison, explaining that she had gone away.

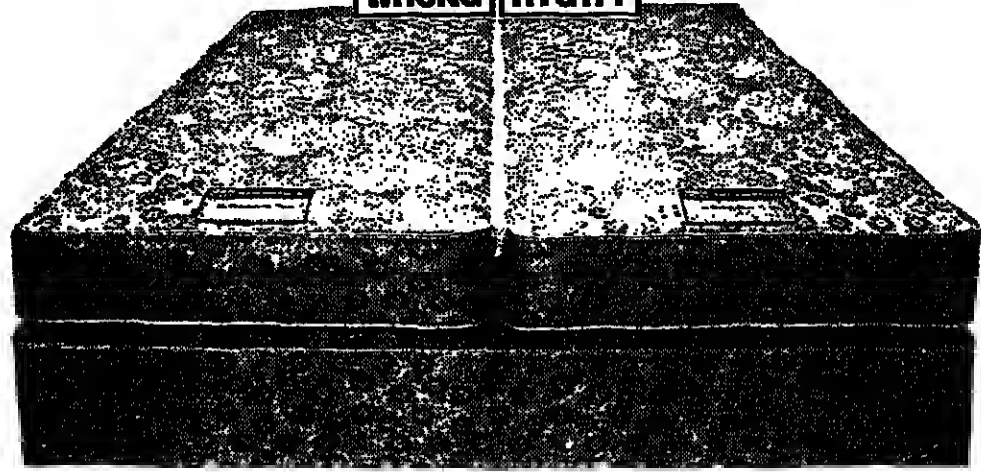
Later Hilda Finch, a pensioner and neighbour of the murdered man, identified Mr Laing in court as the person she had seen talking to Matthew Marward in the street on the night of April 23. The case continues today.

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Doctors advised on allowing patients to die with dignity

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

HOSPITAL patients close to death are being subjected to painful and degrading treatment to keep them alive because of the failure of doctors and nurses to agree on who should be allowed to die.

The confusion has prolonged suffering, distressed relatives and provoked angry scenes among medical staff. It has also led to unnecessary deaths.

Despite instructions sent to all hospitals in 1991 by the government's chief medical officer requiring them to introduce a resuscitation policy, many have failed to implement it. Derek Dean, director of nursing policy at the Royal College of Nursing, said: "Hospitals have policies but not everyone is committed to following them through and they are not made clear in patients' notes."

Launching guidelines for staff yesterday, the British Medical Association and the Royal College said doctors and nurses must agree which patients should be allowed to die, identify them clearly in hospital notes and ensure that all staff knew and understood the decision.

If a patient marked "not for resuscitation" then suffers a

cardiac arrest, under the guidelines they will be allowed to die in peace. Resuscitation can be traumatic, involving an assault on the patient with tubes, drip lines, electric shocks and pounding of the chest which can distress relatives, alarm other patients and give the impression of showing a lack of respect for the dead.

The guidelines say the decision not to resuscitate rests with the consultant in charge, and should be made in consultation with other staff, the patient and their family after careful consideration of the patient's condition. Discussion with all patients would be inappropriate but "there are circumstances in which sensitive exploration of the patient's wishes should be undertaken," the guidelines say.

"Many people do not realise that 'do not resuscitate' orders may be made in hospital," June Andrews, of the Royal College said. "It makes explicit things that people may feel uncomfortable about. But it is better that people can be seen to be making the decisions properly."

Dr Fisher said: "This is not an example of medical staff playing God. The fact that you

know how to do something does not mean you are always obliged to do it. Given that the clinical decision [whether to resuscitate] has to be made at some point, it should be made in the light of clinical factors, the views of the patient and their family, and not made in a crisis."

Dr Fleur Fisher, head of medical law and ethics at the BMA, said the problem was chiefly one of people being resuscitated who would have preferred not to be. "What the patient would want should be given absolute priority," she said. "Resuscitation is not appropriate in every case. What some people are looking for is a good death and they don't want to be hauled back."

Many patients who are resuscitated do not survive long. In one study 60 per cent of patients who suffered a cardiac arrest on the general wards of one hospital were "successfully" resuscitated but almost all died soon afterwards. Only 3 per cent went home.



Arnhem revisited: Geoff Holmes, 73, in the kit he wore, beside a para today

Para veterans to jump back in time

By JOE JOSEPH

IF, ON a balmy Dutch afternoon in September next year, the citizens of Arnhem turn away from their tulips and squint into a sky flecked with parachutes, they should prepare for the imminent landing of 30 veteran British paras. The old soldiers will be marking the fiftieth anniversary of their second world war jump into the battle zone of Arnhem.

It will be an unusual form of transport for many of the veterans. Most have spent at least five years travelling on a bus pass rather than by parachute. Many are in their eighties. One is blind and another has one leg.

Geoff Holmes, a former corporal who is organising the jump, has swapped para battle cries for practical warnings: "I don't want to worry the good people of Arnhem, but there will be a few colostomy bags and at least a dozen walking sticks included. Umpteen free-falling sets of false teeth, too. I suspect."

The golden jubilee leap will be the highlight of an emotional day as thousands of

paras from Britain, America and Canada again embrace the Dutch families who hid them and helped them to escape from the site of an embarrassing defeat, after Allied troops landed a bridge too far into the war zone. Prince Bernhard, father of Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands, will fly the lead aircraft. Less able veterans will be strapped to young Dutch parachutists for "tandem" jumps.

"We're all a bit mad, but several have responded saying they've now got something to live for," Mr Holmes said. "There have been a few problems trying to convince the authorities that while we may be fragile in age, we are by no means gaga. But we are now receiving nothing but the most generous co-operation except, of course, that we are uninsurable."

The veterans will raise money for charity with their jump. Lieutenant General Sir Michael Gray, Colonel Commandant of the Parachute Regiment, said: "I have nothing but the highest admiration for these old men."

Police drug evidence 'unreliable'

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THREE men and a woman who claimed they were framed on drug charges by police now involved in a corruption investigation were yesterday cleared by the Court of Appeal.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said it could no longer rely on evidence from the officers, from Stoke Newington, northeast London. They had been suspended in connection with an enquiry into alleged corruption at the police station.

Dennis Tulloch, 45, Edward Brown, 36, and Ida Odeinde, 33, were jailed after trials at Snaresbrook Crown Court in 1991, but were later freed on bail pending the appeal. Rennie Kingsley, 46, had completed his sentence.

Kenneth Aylett, for the CPS, said further appeals could follow as more material was released by the Police Complaints Authority, which is supervising the investigations. Since the enquiry began in 1991, eight officers have moved from the station.

So far the CPS has offered no evidence in 17 drug cases and 17 defendants have been acquitted in other cases. Four more cases are waiting to be heard. Seven cases, including the four yesterday, are going or have gone to appeal and 12 civil actions are pending.

Mr Kingsley, a housing officer from Hackney, said: "There are many other people still in prison because of evidence from the same police station."

The appeal was heard by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gostforth, Mr Justice Henry and Mr Justice Blofield. Mr Aylett told them that three officers had been suspended during enquiries and Det Con Roy Lewandowski, the only one named, had been jailed for 18 months for theft.

Bank card frauds cost £165m

A £2 million campaign against plastic card fraud is to be launched, after losses of £165 million last year. About 1.8 million of the nation's 30 million cards went missing.

The Association for Payment Clearing Services, whose members are high street banks and building societies, said yesterday that the campaign would focus on motorists, women and office workers as those most prone to have cards stolen. Shop staff who stop a fraudulent transaction can earn a £50 reward.

Libel payout

Yusuf Islam, formerly the singer Cat Stevens, accepted libel damages from *Private Eye* after an article suggested he used charity funds to buy weapons for Afghan rebels.

Assault charge

The showjumper Harvey Smith, 54, of High Eldwick, West Yorkshire, was remanded on bail by Bingley magistrates, accused of causing actual bodily harm.

Wasp blamed

Dawn Skinner, 43, of Highcliffe, Dorset, crashed her car after being frightened by a wasp, Christchurch magistrates were told. She admitted careless driving.

Pack instinct

Police trying to remove the body of Leo Brown, 50, from his home in Edale, Derbyshire, were kept at bay for seven hours by his 30 alsatians.

Rushdie split

The author Salman Rushdie has been granted a decree nisi, ending his five-year marriage to Marianne Wiggins.

The way it isn't



MY MOTHER used to take us to Chessington zoo. We had no interest whatsoever in the animals, so my mother would force us to spend half an hour looking at the giraffes, lions and tremendously unfunny chimps before letting us go on our first and only love — the funfair.

Since then, the rest of the world has gone off zoos in such a big way that Chessington zoo has rechristened itself Chessington World of Adventure. Oddly enough, the venture in public opinion swing from zoos has coincided with my own swing towards them. Now, whenever I go to a foreign country, I make straight for the zoo. Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Spain (the only albino gorilla ever

recorded is alive and well in Barcelona zoo) and Russia have all delighted me with their zoos. Personally, I much prefer zoos to wildlife parks. In wildlife parks, animals are distant and seem to lack all sense of purpose. There is none of the peculiar, unspoken interchange and eye-play between man and beast one finds in zoos.

In a fortnight, I am off to stay in Dublin. I have never been to the zoo in Phoenix Park before, so I am looking forward to it. "It's a rather sad place," my hostess told me on the phone yesterday. But that's what everyone says about every zoo, and I never believe them. St Petersburg zoo, for example, is very down-at-heel, with little animals forced to share elderly cages with bigger animals that would eat them were it not for thin chicken-wire barriers, but it isn't sad. How much more fulfilling for an animal to spend its life in a cage in the thick of St Petersburg, looking at a variety of humans, than to be stuck in the middle of some dank jungle with only sweaty foliage for company.

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Security film of Harrods bomb suspects released



Suspect 1: glasses may have been a disguise

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND Yard yesterday released computer-enhanced film from security cameras of two men they suspect planted an IRA bomb outside Harrods in January and may have been involved in other attacks in London.

The pictures show the two men, one carrying a briefcase, smiling and talking to each other as they walk along the street outside the Knightsbridge store for about 30 seconds at 9.09am on Thursday, January 28. About ten minutes later, two coded telephone calls warned that there

were devices inside and outside the store and the 1lb device exploded about 9.40am. 20 minutes before the shop was due to open. Three people were slightly injured.

The pictures released were taken by two cameras and show the men walking towards one lens and away from another. One is carrying a briefcase, and both are well-dressed and would fit into a crowd in that part of London without raising suspicion. They are aged between 30 and 40.

The police have had the film for some time but Commander David Tucker, head

of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, said premature publicity might have enabled the men to escape. Police do not know yet if they have been involved in other attacks in London.

After four weeks of work, police still cannot identify the men and Mr Tucker asked the public to consider whether they knew of them or their whereabouts.

The anti-terrorist branch has opened a special line for calls from the public on 0800 789321.

The glasses the men were wearing may have been a disguise. Mr Tucker said that they might have a room in a

hotel or guest house or have moved into a street. They could recently have bought a vehicle and he did not rule out the possibility that they could be living outside London.

Since the Harrods bomb, four other devices have exploded in or near the capital. On February 3, passengers were taken off a Victoria to Ramsgate train at a station in Beckenham, south London, shortly before a bomb destroyed one of the carriages. There was a second blast hours later at South Kensington Underground station.

A week later, a small device exploded in the doorway of a

house in Belgravia in the early hours. Detectives believe the terrorists may have been forced to dump it there as it was not an obvious target. Last Saturday, 18 people were injured by a blast in Camden High Street, north London.

Scotland Yard would not comment yesterday on whether police had obtained other film from cameras in Knightsbridge, but it is likely that more film of the two men was recorded.

Their descriptions are likely to have been circulated not only among all mainland forces and the RUC but also to the Garda Síochána in Dublin.



Suspect 2: smartly dressed, briefcase

Bingham calls for human rights law

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND'S most senior civil judge urged the government last night to give judges greater power to protect citizens' rights by enshrining the European human rights convention in domestic law.

The call by Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, came 24 hours after John Smith, the Labour leader, urged a constitutional reform including enactment of basic human rights into British law. Sir Thomas demanded that the issue be addressed as a matter of "immediacy".

Such a move would restore Britain to its former place as an international standard-bearer of liberty and justice, he said. In time it would "stifle the insidious and damaging belief that it is necessary to go abroad to obtain justice".

Giving the annual Denning lecture in London, sponsored by the Bar Association for Commerce, Finance and Industry, Sir Thomas said that it was time to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights as part of British law. "If the common law as it stands were giving the rights of United Kingdom citizens the same protection as the convention... one might wonder why the United Kingdom's record as a Strasbourg litigant was not more favourable," he said.

English judges had been hampered in protecting human rights by the "failure of successive governments over many years" to enshrine the convention. Such a move would have enabled English judges to make a ruling on individuals' claims under the convention, rather than Continental judges doing so.

As a result, the protection of human rights in Britain was not in a satisfactory position. "The elective dictatorship of the majority means that, by and large, the government of the day can get its way, even if its majority is small," he said.

One factor which gave the issue immediacy was the tightness of the parliamentary timetable, which meant that measures to remedy violations of human rights could not find a place in the queue and would not command any political priority. "If anyone doubts this, I would refer to 38 reports of the Law Commission which currently await implementation," Sir Thomas said.

Second, the "increasingly heterogeneous nature of our society and the increasingly assertive stance of minorities" meant that there would be a growing number of cases in which prevailing practice would be said to infringe human rights. "As it stands, our courts are not well-fitted to mediate in these situations. In the European convention, an instrument lies ready to hand which, if not providing an ideal solution, nonetheless offers a clear improvement on the present position."

Sir Thomas rejected arguments deployed against incorporating the convention. One was that British judges were drawn from a narrow, unrepresentative minority and were therefore not fit to draw demarcation lines between sets of people. He said that he did not accept that view of the judiciary, nor doubts that it could be entrusted to protect human rights.

"No one familiar with the development of the law in fields as diverse as, for instance, the rent acts, the factories acts, labour law or judicial review could, I think, fairly accuse the judges of throwing their weight on the side of the big battalions against the small man or woman," he said.

He wondered how it could be sensible to entrust such decisions to an international panel of judges in Strasbourg but not to judges in Britain. The right of appeal to Strasbourg should not be dismantled, but rights claimed under the convention should first be put before judges here.

"The choice is not between judges and no judges; it is whether all matches in this field must be played away."

Baltic Exchange rises from the rubble of terrorists' handiwork

By NICHOLAS WATT AND LOUISE CARPENTER

ALMOST a year to the day after an IRA bomb devastated the Baltic Exchange in the City of London, trading is to resume in the ornate building. After painstaking restoration, the world's ships and raw materials will again be traded in the exchange, which was initially condemned by surveyors after a 100 lb bomb exploded outside on April 10, 1992, killing three people and injuring 80.

Traders return to work on April 5 when Lord Calhoun, the shipping minister, reopens the offices. Jim Buckley, the exchange's chief executive who has been working out of Lloyd's, said yesterday: "We have recovered from a senseless catastrophe that was a mindless waste of people's

lives. The exchange brings in \$1.5 billion for Britain in invisible earnings and we are just getting back to our jobs."

The trading floor will be transferred to the Queen's Room for the next three years while restoration of the marble-clad ball, which took the full force of the blast, is completed. The Queen's Room, which was built in the second world war as an air raid shelter, survived the bomb virtually intact and £500,000 has been spent on turning it into a trading floor, with telephone lines, kitchens and offices.

Complete restoration of the grade II listed building will take another £30 million and three years, according to plans drawn up in September.

Mr Buckley said: "We have dismantled the front of the building stone by stone so it can be restored. It would have been a lot simpler and cheaper to have sent in a bulldozer, but this is a beautiful building. We did have to demolish the marble entrance hall, which was all but destroyed by the bomb."

Every stone from the building's facade has been marked, photographed and drawn by hand. They are now lying in a Dorset field before being brought back to the exchange in St Mary Axe where they will be rebuilt with the help of a computer.

Restoration work on the original trading floor will be painstaking. Chunks of marble, brought over from Italy when the floor was built in 1903, dangled from the ceiling after the explosion and its famous glass dome lay shattered on the floor. Stained glass is to be restored and the late Victorian plasterwork will be refitted. The traders' drinking fountain, under a bronze statue of a nude woman, was virtually unharmed in the explosion.

The exchange is also taking the chance to redesign its offices. "They were a very old-fashioned design and out of date for today's business," Mr Buckley said.

Such hopes for the exchange could never have been entertained as Mr Buckley picked his way through the rubble the morning after the blast. Surveyors said that there was little hope for the building. "We were very pessimistic. There was a dangerous structure notice and the facade looked as if it was about to topple into the street."

Mr Buckley vividly recalled the night of the bomb as traders and brokers celebrated the Tory election victory in the City's bars. "I first heard about the blast from a news flash," he said. "I then received a call to tell me that a member of staff had been injured. I liaised with police and hospitals and when I came in the next morning he was still buried under the rubble." The man, who was an attendant, later died.

The Baltic Exchange celebrates its 250th anniversary next year. In 1744, the traders' coffee house was formally named as the Virginia and Baltic Coffee House, and the first codes were drawn up.

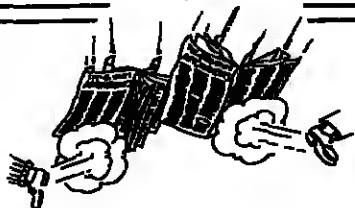


Wrecked: engineers surveying the damage last year



Glorious return: the partially restored Baltic Exchange. It will take £30m and three years to complete the work.

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THE TIMES

Police station mortar attack shatters homes

By EDWARD GORMAN
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

DENIS Mulgrew, a Catholic, and his Protestant neighbours Elizabeth and William Thompson had been waiting for the IRA to have another go at the police station in Bessbrook for years.

They remember the last time the station in the heavily patrolled south Armagh village was targeted, about 11 years ago, but on that occasion the attack was launched from the other side, sparing them the worst of the damage. This time their 1940s semi-detached homes took the full force of the blast when the IRA launched two mark 15 "barack-buster" mortars outside their front windows.

Mr and Mrs Thompson were watching television and were almost thrown out of their armchairs by the force of

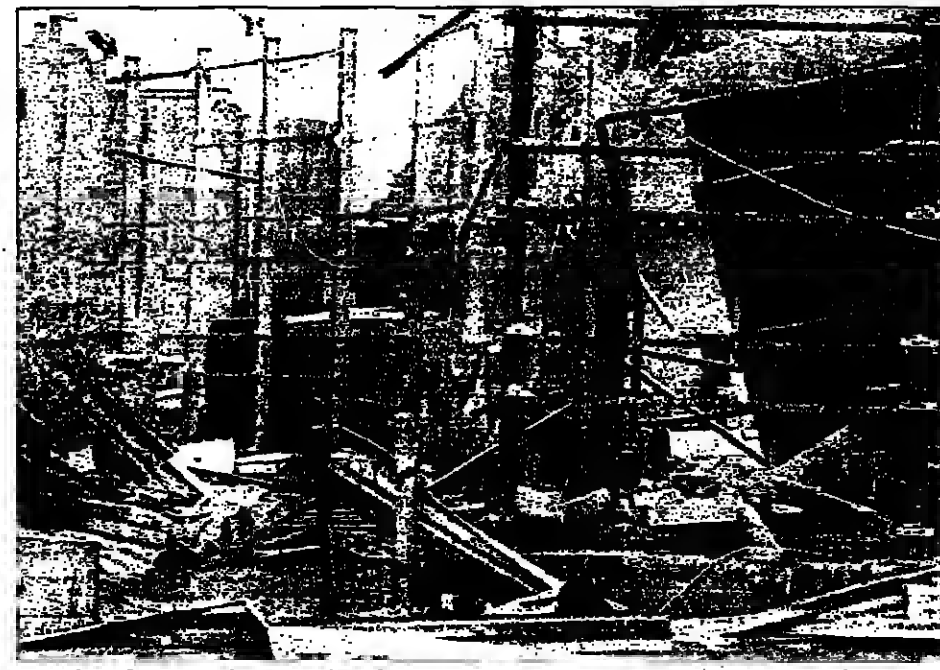
the twin blasts. The explosions cracked their ceilings, smashed their front windows, took the curtains and blinds off the walls and shattered scores of slates on the roof.

Next door Mr Mulgrew, a former co-chairman of the local community association, was already on his way outside having spotted the abandoned vehicles moments before the first blast about 7pm on Monday night. He was trying to help police to clear the area and was thrown to the ground twice as the mortars lifted off.

Mr Mulgrew, 45, who is unemployed and lives alone with his two red setters, escaped injury. Eleven people in the mixed Protestant and Catholic estate were slightly hurt. One elderly woman who suffered a suspected heart attack after the explosion was still in hospital yesterday.

The mortars, recently perfected by the IRA, are launched in a manner similar to a naval depth charge and can contain up to 300lb of explosive. They caused considerable damage to the back of the police station but no injuries to officers inside.

Assessors from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, who were touring the estate yesterday as workmen



Site of destruction: Bessbrook yesterday after the IRA had fired two mortars

boarded up broken windows and replaced cracked roofing tiles, said that 12 homes suffered substantial damage, with 92 damaged to some degree.

The government has always hoped that attacks of this kind against civilians will

help to turn people against the IRA. In Bessbrook it was hard to find anyone who was prepared to speak up for them.

Mr Mulgrew, whose home was probably in the worse condition, said that he could find no words to describe the

people responsible for it. As army helicopters circled the scene of the attack, he said that all paramilitaries were the same, showing no regard for human life. "When you look around and you see the damage, you are just totally disgusted."

MISSING POWs

Families of missing British and Commonwealth POWs from WWII and Korea, or any prisoners who were returned late, please contact author Nigel Cawthorne with any information for forthcoming book and trip which will attempt to locate missing men in ex-USSR. Write c/o 4th Estate 289 Westmore Green W11 2QA Tel: 071 727 8593 Fax: 071 792 3176

WEDNESDAY MARCH 3 1993
used
Bingle
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Citizen's Charter awards fail to make their mark

By MICHAEL DYNES, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

FRESH evidence that the Citizen's Charter is failing to capture the national imagination is provided today by a MORI survey showing an overwhelming lack of public awareness about the charter's award scheme.

Only 1 per cent of the 30,000 organisations eligible for a Charter Mark applied for the award, which was launched last year in an attempt to promote the charter. Although an advertising campaign has ensured that 75 per cent of the public know about the Citizen's Charter, only 12 per cent can recall seeing a Charter Mark symbol, while a mere 3 per cent have heard of the award scheme, the survey showed.

The findings have forced the Charter Unit, the Cabinet Office body responsible for promoting the charter, to re-launch the Charter Mark scheme for 1993. The number of Charter Mark awards is to be increased from 50 to 100 to provide greater incentives for public sector organisations and the privatised utilities to participate. The literature explaining the scheme has been redrafted to provide more information about the scheme. Last year there were 36 winners, including Severn

Trent Water, Bromley Library Services, the UK Passport Agency, and the United Bristol Healthcare Trust.

Eighteen months after the launch of the Citizen's Charter, "many people still know little about it, a reminder to public sector professionals that if the charter symbolises a sea-change in the administration of public services to them, those not directly involved have only a vague idea about it", the survey said.

The survey, commissioned by the Charter Unit and based on interviews with applicants and non-applicants, the regulatory authorities and consumer and media organisations, found extensive support for the goals of the charter but widespread scepticism that improvements would materialise. Many observers felt that "by promising improvement without more funding, charters may create unfulfilled expectations and thus build resentment". Media commentators regarded improved performance by British Rail as the yardstick by which the entire charter initiative will be judged, while doubting that there would be any improvements, the survey found.

Despite calls for more clarity about how the Charter Mark

scheme operates, and more openness about how entrants are judged, most public sector organisations which applied for the awards believe that the initiative would lead to an improvement in public services in the long term.

Media and consumer organisations, however, had yet to be convinced that the charter initiative would lead to any noticeable improvement in public services, while more than half of the public sector organisations which did not apply for the awards felt the charter had little impact, the survey found. However, two-thirds of unsuccessful applicants and almost half non-applicants said they were likely to apply for an award in 1993.

The Cabinet Office said: "We commissioned the research to make sure we were running the best scheme possible. We had our own ideas about how it might be improved, but we wanted to see what others said."



The abilities of MPs' pets will overshadow those of their owners at next month's final of Parliament's Dog of the Year contest. An all-party canine competition has been whittled down to 14 finalists. Mr Speaker, an English Springer spaniel belonging to David Maclean (bottom left), junior environment minister, may be a favourite with a CV which boasts answering the telephone and turning on taps. Dr Ian Paisley (right), the Ulster Unionist MP for Antrim North, will enter Bishop, his collie, on the grounds that he has "a very kind and gentle personality". Other contenders include Bryan Gould (centre) and Angus, Sir Trevor Skeet (top, with Bella) and Eric Martlew and Mick (top left).

Asylum bill defeat for government

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY

PEERS of all parties joined forces yesterday to defeat the government over its plans to alter the rights of refugees seeking asylum in Britain.

A cross-party amendment to the asylum and immigration appeals bill, demanding the creation of an advisory panel to help young unaccompanied refugees, was approved in the Lords by 169 to 114, a majority of 55. Peers voiced concern that asylum seekers under 18 will have no assistance when they enter Britain without adult supervision.

The amendment, introduced by Lord Brightman, a former Lord of Appeal, requires the Home Office to establish a panel of children's advisers. A second new clause setting out the panel's role was approved without a vote. Labour pressed Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, to include the new provision in the bill when it returns to the Commons. Earl Ferrers, a Home Office minister, said the change was neither necessary nor desirable. Responsibility for a child's welfare lay with local authorities, which were best placed to deputise for a guardian.

Register reveals MPs' financial standing

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MULTI-millionaires on the Tory benches in the Commons rub shoulders with those whose only income is their parliamentary salary, according to a breakdown of the Register of Members' Interests, conducted by the organisation Labour Research.

Heading the truly rich table are two ministers, Michael Heseltine and Tim Sainsbury. The President of the Board of Trade is a self-made millionaire with a controlling stake in the Haymarket publishing group. Three years ago his fortune was estimated at £60 million, but the recession is believed to have taken its toll.

His trade minister, Mr Sainsbury, effortlessly outstrips him. Labour Research said his personal stake in the family supermarket business was worth more than £160 million, at current market prices.

However 43 out of the 83 ministers appear to have no sources of income other than their salaries. Twelve ministers and 33 backbench Tory MPs are members of Lloyd's of London, although some may be regretting their stake.

On the Labour side the main support is from unions, with 172 out of the 270 MPs declaring sponsorship.

When two worlds should collide

The latest headline "revolutions" from Labour Research about the many directorships and consultancies of MPs miss the real point. Politicians do not have too many links with business, but too few.

The concentration on the outside jobs which MPs pick up after entering the Commons — as revealed each year in the Register of Members' Interests — obscures the far more significant decline in the number of MPs who have business experience before being elected. At the last election only 22 per cent of new MPs had experience of business, roughly the same as in the previous two elections, but down from 32 per cent in 1979. By contrast, there has been a sharp growth in those only with experience of politics, accounting for 29 per cent of the new intake as against 14 per cent of all MPs.

The world of Westminster is increasingly cut off from industry and commerce. That is why many of the outside consultancies taken by MPs are positively useful in keeping them in touch with business.

Many MPs with business links have only had the time to become involved because they have run their own companies. The rigid career structure of big organisations has discouraged rising executives. They are not regarded as serious if they are seeking a candidacy, which has in turn become more time-consuming as an apprenticeship of local activism and council service has usually to be served.

So the Commons is increasingly dominated by a closed shop of career politicians committed to that life since their late teens or early 20s. These trends have worried the main parties, as well as the industry and Parliament Trust, a non-party body bridging both worlds. The trust has always tried to deal with the symptoms of this lack of experience through secondments of MPs to com-

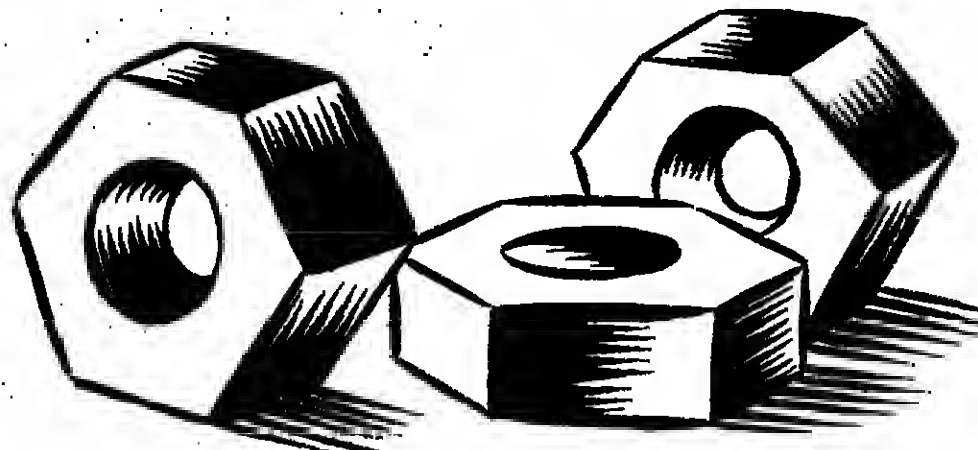
panies, known as fellowship schemes. Now it is trying to deal with the underlying causes.

A survey in 1989 showed that only a quarter of the trust's company backers had policies that actively supported employees who wanted to become politically involved. After lengthy and delicate negotiation, the trust has sponsored a declaration on political service intended to encourage involvement. This has been endorsed by all the party leaders and 43 large companies.

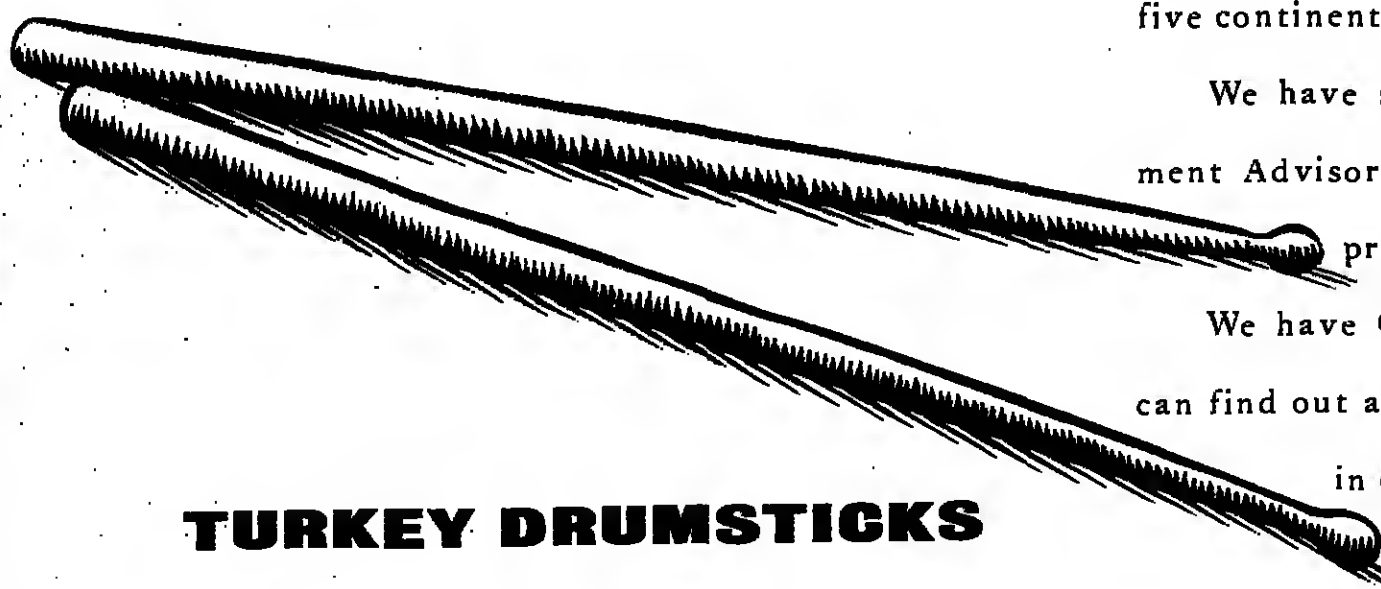
This initiative is being followed up in two ways. The trust is encouraging company signatories to change their personnel policies, drawing on parallel initiatives in Canada and Sweden. Companies should extend present policies covering school governorships and territorial army service to include political work. This would involve paid or unpaid leave for regular political activity and campaigns, and unpaid leave for at least one parliamentary term, with protection of pension and health care rights, together with a guarantee of return to employment at the same level.

The trust has had talks with all the main parties about recruiting more candidates from industry. Sir Norman Fowler, the Tory chairman, has already publicly urged the adoption of more business executives in their 40s as candidates, and the other parties take a similar view. This is a desirable and overdue initiative. But it will not work unless companies and local selection committees are willing to be much more flexible. Any change will be gradual. For quite some time, both the cabinet and the shadow cabinet are likely to be dominated by career politicians.

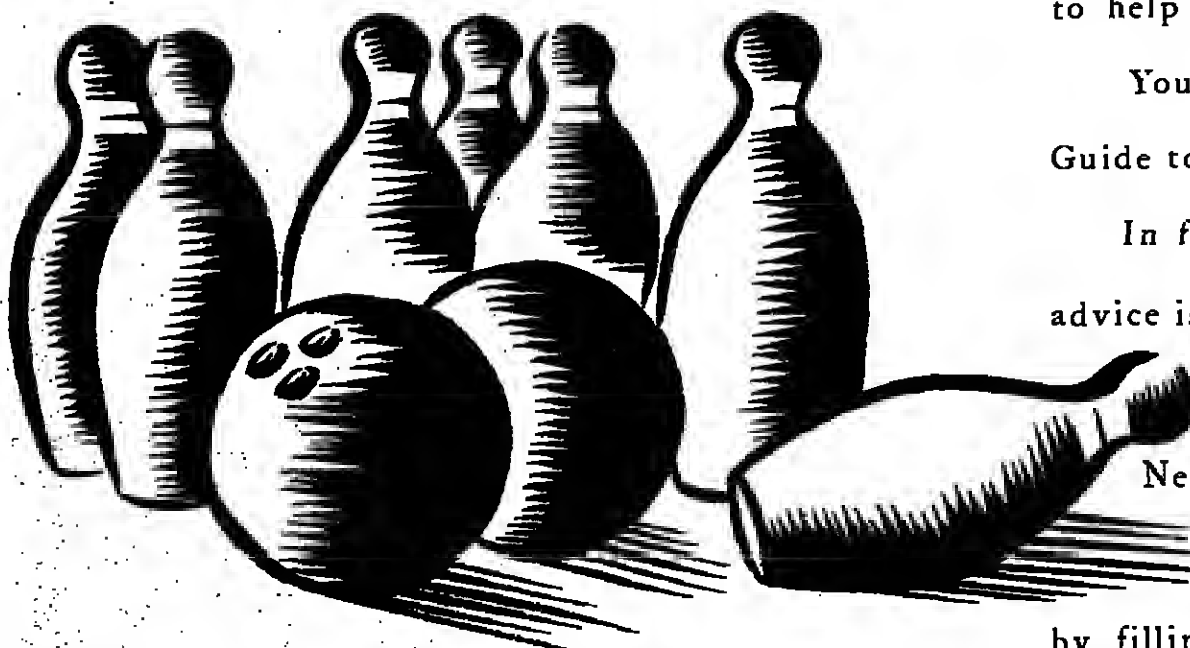
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As Britain worries over the recurring problem of young offenders, costly efforts are changing lives

Barnardo's homely care gives Billy a fresh start in life

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

BILLY began his criminal career at the age of nine when he smashed the windows on a caravan near his home and received a caution. Four years later he stole £30 from his mother's partner and was sent to a remand home for three months.

A year later and expelled from school, he had graduated to more serious offences, setting fire to flats near his home twice in one week. Billy was convicted of arson and sent to Glenhorne in Birmingham, one of two youth treatment centres, holding some of the country's most dangerous young criminals and disturbed youngsters.

As Kenneth Clarke yesterday unveiled his proposals to set up a network of "approved school-type" units to hold persistent young offenders, Billy was working as a mechanic and making plans to move into his own flat.

His descent into crime is a textbook example of the need to tackle the roots of the problem. His parents split up when he was 12 after a marriage marred by rows and drink. "You used to hear the window smash and then duck. My parents were always throwing things," he said with a laugh.

After their split, he eventually moved in with his father and was followed by his brothers and sister. He rarely attended school, spending time wandering around the parks and streets of Manchester

■ Support for juvenile criminals when they return to the community is crucial if they are not to resume their old ways

until he was sent to Glenhorne.

Billy's rehabilitation owes much to the type of regime Mr Clarke wants in the new units and the close support he has received under a scheme run by Barnardo's in the west Midlands. The supervision young offenders receive when leaving the units will be crucial in preventing them from resuming a life of crime. The Barnardo's Family and Young People's Support Service offers some youngsters from Glenhorne the opportunity to live with "community parents" as part of an intensive programme designed to prepare them for independence.

Home Office officials say that the Barnardo's scheme shows success can be achieved, but that it requires intensive long-term support by social workers, parents and voluntary agencies.

At Glenhorne, which costs £2,700 per person per week, Billy was given education, training in woodwork, book-keeping and cookery. Psychologists and psychiatrists discussed with him why he committed crimes and how to change his behaviour. He passed examinations in mathematics and English and has certificates for scuba diving, trampolining, sailing and weightlifting. "These are the

first things I have ever been able to show as something I have achieved. I used to be a right violent person. Now I have my job, a car and I'm looking for a flat. If it wasn't for the help I have had at Glenhorne and from Barnardo's, I would still be doing time."

Two years ago, Billy left Glenhorne to live under supervision with his community parents. He and his new family swapped photo albums and had a number of meetings to try to ensure they would get on before Billy moved into their bungalow to begin his new life.

"It has been a challenge because in Glenhorne most of the rules and decisions are made for you. When I came out into the world, it was unpleasant. You have to fight for yourself," Billy said.

His community parents are paid by Barnardo's, which runs the family place project for young people leaving treatment centres. They go on courses dealing with topics such as anti-social behaviour and Aids. They teach Billy skills such as cleaning and cooking but, more importantly, Judy Cook (not her real name) and her husband provide him with guidance, discipline, affection and support during his slow release back into the community. Mrs



Laughing at authority: joyriders in Newcastle upon Tyne boast of their exploits and shrug off the consequences

Cook must report regularly on his progress to Barnardo's staff, who visit every three weeks.

Yesterday social workers from Manchester made one of their three-monthly visits to see Mrs Cook and check on Billy's development. He has had some difficulties, such as forgetting to pay bills, and the support of a foster family has proved invaluable. Mrs Cook

said: "He comes to us and talks it over and we offer him advice. The most important thing is to provide supervision for people in this position. It must be intensive and it is expensive."

Billy visits his family regularly and they have been to see him at the home he shares with his community parents, but he has no wish to return to his old life. "I had a choice. I

could have gone back and had my family on my back or stayed with my community parents who have helped me with my independence and given me a life. I know if I went back I would be at risk again."

"I have been a long way down. I lost my liberty and now I have been put back into the wide world. But I still need people supporting me, advising me and helping to correct my mistakes. I feel I'm ready for my own flat, but Judy will be near by to guide me."

Since leaving Glenhorne, Billy has been offered the opportunity to resume a criminal life. "I could have done things that would have got me into trouble, but I stopped and remembered what I have been through and the opportunity I have to make a life," he said.

Initial findings from a survey of 43 police forces in England and Wales and social services departments showed that 106 juveniles were known or alleged to have committed ten or more offences in the three months up to the end of June last year. The findings, which did not include statistics from the Metropolitan and West Midlands police, were ridiculed by backbench MPs because the criteria were tightly drawn.

Home Office figures for 1991 show 149,000 male offenders and 33,500 females aged between 10 and 17. This is down from a peak of 219,000 males and 45,100 females in 1985. Those aged under 18 account for 17 per cent of offenders, compared with 26 per cent in 1981 and 24 per cent in 1983.

But these figures must be treated with caution as the decrease can be explained, at least in part, by a fall of 19 per cent during the past decade in the number of juveniles in the general population and the increased use by the police of unrecorded warnings. The Home Office also says that much crime goes unreported and that, because a substantial amount of recorded crime is not cleared up, it is impossible to say who committed it.

Figures are little help to Clarke

By OUR HOME CORRESPONDENT

FACED with growing public outrage and a year-long campaign by the police for action, Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, has brought forward a plan to deal with "really persistent nasty little juvenile offenders" that is based on little firm evidence.

The Home Office had been expected to outline its plans in the early summer after it had analysed the extent of persistent teenage offending and the likely costs of providing an answer to a problem that has defied the efforts of successive governments. One Westminster source said yesterday: "We have not got a magic solution. History does not point clearly to an easy way of dealing with such people."

The source said that the history of institutional care, with a succession of scandals involving children's homes and high rates of recidivism among youngsters who had been released from approved schools, had not been good.

Mr Clarke's proposals follow the publication of Home Office figures last month which suggested that there has been no explosion in juvenile crime. The difficulty confronting ministers is that there is little firm evidence on the scale of persistent juvenile offending.

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Therapeutic success is swept aside

By KATE ALDERSON

A RESIDENTIAL centre for juvenile offenders that was one of Britain's most successful therapeutic centres stands empty, closed last month through lack of funds.

Peper Harrow, in Surrey, was once an approved school but during the past 20 years had developed progressive therapy that worked. The irony is not lost on Graeme Farquharson, the former director.

"We're coming full circle. The 20 years spent developing therapy and a safe environment for children could be swept aside by Kenneth Clarke's insistence that we must look up more children," Mr Farquharson said. "It

would be even sadder if this place ever reopened as a secure unit."

Peper Harrow, a charity, closed on January 18 after losing £250,000 last year. "We have the capacity to take 40 children, but only had 17 because local authorities could not afford to send children here any more," Mr Farquharson said.

At a cost of £1,100 per week, severely disturbed adolescents aged 13 and over from throughout Britain were sent to Peper Harrow because of its reputation as a centre for therapeutic excellence. Some of the children were offenders, all were severely disturbed and many had been seriously physically and sexually abused.

Chris Payne, a leading consultant in social care and a specialist in residential care, said it was a "great shame" Peper Harrow had to close, and believes the government's announcement that it is to provide more secure units for persistent juvenile offenders represents a "mistaken U-turn".

"There are not many places in Britain that could offer the therapeutic care of Peper Harrow," Mr Payne said. "During the past 20 years we moved away from secure units, but now there has been a U-turn. In a study of residential care in the West Midlands I recently conducted, I found that local authority provision was contracting as a result of cash shortages."

David Berridge, of the National Children's Bureau, believes Peper Harrow provided a high level of therapeutic care to severely disturbed children, and wants to see a re-assessment of existing residential care facilities, and national co-ordination and regulation, before more secure units are provided.

"We should take more interest in the facilities we already have," he said. "For too long residential care has been treated as a sweep-up operation for difficult children."

"Despite a large number of official reports that have confirmed the need for high-quality residential care for specific groups of children, local authorities and the government have shown no real interest in them."

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"Despite a large number of official reports that have confirmed the need for high-quality residential care for specific groups of children, local authorities and the government have shown no real interest in them."

"We should take more interest in the facilities we already have," he said. "For too long residential care has been treated as a sweep-up operation for difficult children."

Borstal training began in the early 1900s, offering a regime of education, gymnastics, lectures and work related to a trade. The system was formalised in 1908 and teenagers aged between 16 and 20 could be sent to a Borstal initially for between one and three years and subsequently for between six months and two years. In 1982 Borstal training was replaced by youth custody.

In 1933 the reformatories became approved schools for ten to 15-year-olds, giving magistrates the power to send young offenders to residential accommodation designed to provide education and training. Criticised by penal reform groups as "universities of crime", they had a bad record for reconvictions and were abolished in 1969.

Detention centres, intended to provide short sentences combined with hard work and little amusement, opened in 1952. When they came to power in 1979 the Tories launched an initiative to deal with young offenders through a "short sharp shock" regime. Four detention centres for offenders aged between 14 and 20 were

set up and boys in them were subjected to military style drill.

The system failed to work and a study showed that more than 70 per cent of detainees reoffended within two years. The Prison Officers' Association said that the regime's achievement had been to turn out "fit young burglars able to run faster than the police".

Since then the government has accepted the view of penal reformers and the Home Office that efforts should be made to divert young offenders from the criminal justice system and that the emphasis should be on community sentences allied with efforts to address offending behaviour. Yesterday's announcement indicates that in 14 years the Conservative have come almost full circle in dealing with young offenders.

Children can help to find a solution, says princess

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE Princess Royal called yesterday for Britain to look and listen to its young people to help to solve youth crime. Harking back to a golden age was not a solution, she said. Nor was it useful to blame television, declining moral standards, changes in family life or the demise of the church.

The princess was speaking at a conference organised by Crime Concern, of which she is president. There would be no solution without the help of the young, she said. "If we are to change attitudes, we must start with their views

and ideas, addressing their worries and concerns. We should see young people as partners in crime prevention, as a valued and valuable resource."

Police, social workers and council staff were among the audience at the national crime prevention workshop in South Cave, Humberside.

The princess said: "We have to start with crime prevention as young people perceive it: how it impacts on their lives and communities. They have more direct experience of delinquency, not only as perpetrators but also as witnesses, victims and bystanders. They have views and ideas about it, not only on what is serious but also what should be done about it."

She suggested that not enough was being done to get to grips with the underlying causes of youth crime. "Youth crime prevention is a peripheral concern for most agencies involved, a core concern for none. It is rarely undertaken in a planned way."

"We can help by creating a better, more caring and more generous society. A huge effort is needed by all parts of the community."

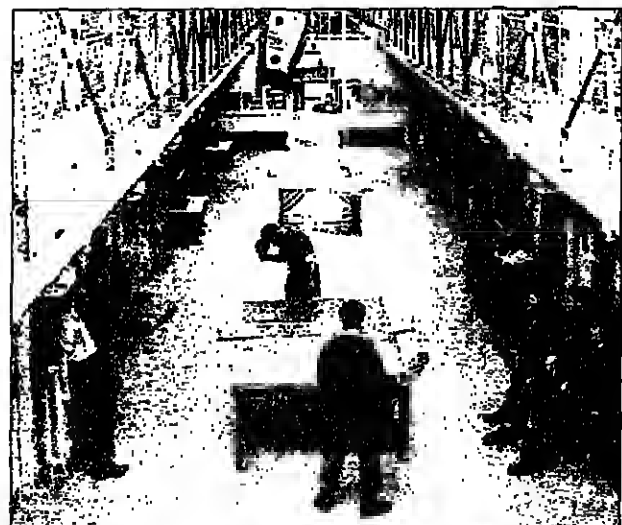
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Imprisoned: the first Borstal, near Rochester, Kent



Learning a trade: Suffolk young offenders in 1952

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UN chief backs use of force to ensure Bosnia peace

As Douglas Hurd meets Boutros Boutros Ghali in New York, Richard Owen, Foreign Editor, and James Bone, UN Correspondent, discuss with the secretary-general whether the UN can meet the test of the huge burdens placed on it



Painful conversion: Boutros Boutros Ghali, who has undergone a change of heart since the row that led Lord Carrington to resign as European Community negotiator in Bosnia, in his UN office this week. Dr Boutros Ghali believes risks have to be taken for the sake of peace

BOUTROS Boutros Ghali, the United Nations secretary-general, will today tell Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, that he is personally ready to see UN troops authorised to use force to implement a peace settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of a more aggressive role for the organisation around the world.

In an interview with *The Times* in advance of Mr Hurd's one-day trip to New York, Dr Boutros Ghali made clear that he no longer opposes greater United Nations involvement in the former Yugoslavia. This contrasts strongly with the warning he gave only months ago that Yugoslavia could become the UN's Vietnam.

"For the sake of peace," he now says, "you have to accept risk." Since his bitter row with Britain over Bosnia policy last summer, a row that culminated in the resignation of Lord Carrington as the European Community's mediator in the conflict, Dr Boutros Ghali has undergone a painful conversion. At first reluctant to countenance any United Nations deployment in the republic, he eventually agreed, under pressure from Europe, to send a UN force to distribute humanitarian aid if the countries who contributed the troops, including Britain, also paid the operation's full costs.

In a report to the security council last month, however, he reversed even that stance, recommending that the UN relief operation in Bosnia be funded by all the members of the UN in the normal way.

"I will not say I have changed, but the situation has changed," he said with a wry grimace in his office on the 38th floor of the UN headquarters building in New York on Monday. "We have been involved in so many operations that it would be difficult to say now that I don't want to be involved in this one," he added.

As to his present relations with Britain, Dr Boutros Ghali said they were "very cordial". He recalled with a smile that, in his early days as

secretary-general, the British media had regarded him as a "wog" and had denigrated his efforts. That episode, he said, was now firmly relegated to the past.

He added that he was extremely grateful to John Major, the prime minister, for organising a summit meeting at the UN at which he had been able to meet key world leaders from the very beginning of his time as the world body's chief.

Dr Boutros Ghali also thanked Britain for hosting the London conference on the former Yugoslavia last year, and said that the benefits could be seen in the Owen-Vance plan for a settlement in the Bosnian dispute.

With UN troops about to

take over control of Somalia from the American-led task force under broad ground rules, the secretary-general now accepts that the world body is entering what he calls a new stage in its history. "It appears more and more that you have a consensus that it is in the interest of the member states to reinforce the United Nations, to give missions to the United Nations," he said.

"Nobody wants to be the policeman of the world," he added. "Member states from Russia, to Europe, to the United States are quite interested in these peacemaking operations of the United Nations. So there is a change. And I welcome this change."

The UN now has about 55,000 troops in operation around the world and will soon add thousands more in Somalia as well as Mozambique. The annual cost of UN peacekeeping currently runs to about \$3.5 billion (£2.1

billion), three times the organisation's normal budget. As well as in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, UN forces are already facing serious challenges in Angola and Cambodia.

Dr Boutros Ghali dismissed recent setbacks to UN peacekeeping operations, describing them as normal up and downs. Among the incidents have been Iraq's incursions into Kuwait across the UN-policed border, the kidnapping of UN soldiers by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and the killing of Hasko Turatic, a Bosnian deputy prime minister, in a UN peacekeeping vehicle in Sarajevo in January.

He said, however, that he would welcome UN members authorising United Nations forces to take tougher action in trouble spots. Last year he called for the creation of UN "peace enforcement" units and a reserve army.

"When you spend one year to pin [down] an agreement between two protagonists in a dispute and then one of the two violates the agreement and you are able to do nothing then, practically, you put the credibility of the United Nations in a weak position," he said.

The secretary-general added that detailed planning for the implementation of a possible Bosnian peace accord — which other UN officials say could involve the deployment of some 60,000 troops — was still in progress.

He made clear, however, that he personally wanted UN troops to be empowered to use force in Bosnia to put into effect any peace agreement accepted by the three warring factions.

"In Yugoslavia, like in Somalia, you may have certain gangs who are not under the control of the leaders who have accepted, and here you will be compelled to use force if you want to give the minimum of credibility to your plan or your peace process," he said.

If the peace agreement eventually collapsed and UN troops became embroiled in

fighting on the ground, he said, it would be up to the security council, and particularly the stronger members, to decide what to do about it.

"[The troops] are not under my command, they are under the command of the security council," he said. "I am just a middle man between the security council and the command. What is more important, and everyone seems to forget this, is that the security council is Great Britain, is France, is the United States, is Russia."

"They are the international community. They have decided, they have accepted, they have sent the troops, they are their own troops. The UN depends on the will of the major countries."

With the Bosnian peace talks chaired by Lord Owen, Lord Carrington's replacement, and Cyrus Vance, the

UN negotiator, resuming in New York this week, Dr Boutros Ghali said he believed a settlement could be in sight in the former Yugoslav republic. "There is a fatigue," he said. "They understand that it is in their interest to find a solution, that the sooner they have a solution the better will be the situation; and, according to the reports I have received, there is progress. They are more willing to find a solution than before. Things have changed to give us a minimum of hope."

He made clear, however, that he would tell the security council not to become involved militarily in Bosnia if the Muslim-led government and the minority Serbs failed to join the Croats in signing a peace accord.

He also emphasised that he would complain again, as he

did last summer — when he criticised the international community's silence on Somalia — if he felt that UN intervention in the former Yugoslavia were diverting attention from UN operations in other troubled areas of the world.

Since taking office at the beginning of last year, Dr Boutros Ghali has proved an unexpectedly controversial secretary-general, often criticised for taking an egregious position without adequate consultation.

He has come under fire for his early position on Bosnia, for his veiled call for sanctions against Israel over the Palestinian deportees in Lebanon, and for his insistence that US troops should disarm Somalia before leaving and handing over the UN.

He does not help his cause by using blunt language to

express his feelings, telling the people of Sarajevo, for instance, that there are ten worse places in the world, or insisting that the key security council resolution on the Arab-Israeli conflict was "non-binding".

But he is unapologetic, describing the complaints of governments merely as evidence that, at 69, he is an active figure. "It is healthy that you are active," he said.

"The member states are under the impression that there must always be an agreement between [the UN] secretariat and the member states. You will not always be able to obtain the consensus of 180 countries."

"After 14 months in this institution I have discovered that they are asking the point of view of the secretary-general and that the secretary-general, if you look back at the

Western diplomats drifting back to Monrovia

Liberia claims civil war nearly over

By EVE-ANN PRENTICE, DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

AN END is in sight for Liberia's bloody civil war, with Charles Taylor, the main rebel leader, facing defeat, according to the interim government. West African peacekeeping forces, known as Ecomog, are in control of the capital, Monrovia, and have driven Mr Taylor and his dwindling band of National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) troops from their base in Gbanga, according to Lamini Waritay, the information minister of the interim government.

The capital, where thousands of civilians were slaughtered in 1990, is regarded as so safe that US diplomats began to return two weeks ago and other Western diplomats are planning to follow. "Mr Taylor is fighting for his life. He is on the ropes," Mr Waritay said in London yesterday. "We are well on the way to disabling his war machine, and his fighters are surrendering in their hundreds. His ministers have fled and his entire administration behind NPFL lines has broken down."

The rebel leader, who con-

trolled 90 per cent of the West African country last year, now holds less than 40 per cent of territory, most of it sparsely populated country near the border with Ivory Coast. However, the peacekeeping forces believe Mr Taylor is still receiving arms from across the frontier in Ivory Coast and trying to recruit Tuareg mercenaries from Mali. The civil war, in which up to 250,000 of Liberia's 2.5 million people have died, began after Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson launched an attack against the military government of Samuel Doe on Christmas eve, 1989. However, what started as a popular offensive against a military dictatorship soon descended into a bloody free-for-all, with indiscriminate



murder of civilians, including civil servants.

The Economic Community of West African States (Ecomog) intervened in 1990 after forming an intervention committee of heads of state from Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Mali and Togo. The committee decided to send in the peacekeeping force and set up the interim government. The leaders of the interim government may not hold office after elections are held when the war is finally declared to be over.

Mr Johnson, who split from Mr Taylor in 1990 to form his own group, was briefly part of the interim administration, but was expelled after he began summarily executing some of his own supporters.

One of Liberia's most pressing problems now is to repatriate the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the war. Monrovia, which had a pre-war population of 450,000, is now overwhelmed by 1.2 million people, while 500,000 more are in refugee camps. More than 100,000 refugees are reported to be at one camp in Sierra Leone alone.

Million South Africans can come to Britain

FROM MICHAEL HAMILYN IN JOHANNESBURG

IF, as some fear, life for whites becomes intolerable in South Africa over the next few years in the transition to black majority rule, Britain can expect a flood of people to swell the dole queues, or to use their skills in competing for the scarce professional and managerial jobs.

As many as a million people have the absolute right to emigrate to Britain under present rules. If the new South Africa, ruled by an African National Congress-Communist Party alliance, goes wrong, many may make use of this opportunity.

But up to a million may be only the first wave. For if the new non-racial South Africa is allowed to rejoin the Commonwealth, (which is more or less automatically granted) before they can enter Britain

permanently. Diplomats say there has been no real increase in the number of letters granted recently.

Nobody is able to estimate the number of South Africans with British grandparents. The number of English-speakers is given as about two and a half million.

It has been accepted that South Africa would return to the Commonwealth fold as soon as the apartheid regime ended.

"Obviously this would be an additional factor to think about if South Africa did apply to join," said an embassy spokesman last night. "But that is some way down the track." Officials believe that many British South Africans would not be attracted back to cold and recession-hit Britain, but would prefer Australia or the United States. Both these

countries and Canada have been accepting immigrants at a rate of about 10,000 a year. It is not easy to obtain work permits, particularly as all three countries have been suffering economically.

Some South Africans are reported to be considering more exotic places, such as Argentina, where there is a well-established Afrikaner community in Comodoro Rivadavia, 1,000 miles south of Buenos Aires. The Argentine embassy reports two or three enquiries a day, although nobody has completed the formalities during the past six months.

The ANC is aware that there is the risk of a drain of valuable skills, which is one reason for their moderate stance on land reform and wealth redistribution after it comes to power.

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Yeltsin appeals for Communist allies in saving the nation

FROM ANNE McELROY IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Yeltsin said yesterday he was prepared to work with moderate Communists, in his most unconventional attempt so far to recruit support for his struggling presidency.

"We think that the Communists should be treated with respect, as any other political party, and we should work with them," Mr Yeltsin, who banned the Soviet Communist party in the wake of the 1991 abortive coup, told *Pravda*, the former party daily. He called on "all reasonable forces" to back him in his power battle with the conservative parliament, led by its Speaker, Russian Khasbulatov.

His blandishment to one group of sworn enemies was immediately followed by a threat to another. In a fiery speech to the parliament, he warned the assembly that he would use the "final option" of imposing direct Kremlin rule if it tried to use the forum of the Congress of People's Deputies to unseat him. It was the second time this week that he had hinted at suspending the constitution, which he claimed on Sunday had been amended so much by Congress last December that he no longer felt bound to it by his oath of allegiance. "I don't think that things need go this far and I hope they don't... but if conservatives use extreme measures to destroy Russia, then to save Russia, democracy and reform we must seek other ways," Mr Yeltsin said, and abruptly left the podium.

Mr Yeltsin fears that an increasingly self-confident legislature is seeking to replace him as supreme power in the land. But any attempt to suspend Congress or the constitution would provoke civil unrest and require the united backing of the security forces and the army — something of which he can no longer be sure.

In his fight to curb parliament, Russia's president is courting his old party enemies while repeating threats of direct rule

Earlier, Mr Yeltsin said that he would press ahead with an opinion poll on who should have supreme power, if Congress cancelled the referendum he is planning for next month, saying that it was time to ask "whom the people support and which way we should go".

The session of Congress, likely to be convened by Mr Yeltsin's arch-enemy Mr Khasbulatov next week, comes at a time of high inflation, slowing reforms and after a series of unwise tactical decisions by Mr Yeltsin. The meeting is supposed to be discussing a power-sharing deal to halt tampering with the constitution, to give the reform programme a much-needed period of stability. But once convened in Moscow, the 1,000-strong plenary assembly, still furious at the president's miscarried attempt to dissolve it last December, is unlikely to leave without attacking him.

Faced with a hostile legislature, the once confident Mr Yeltsin is now reduced to alternating pleas for support with threats of drastic action.



Yeltsin: alternating pleas with threats

His outbursts are beginning to be reminiscent of King Lear when he threatened to unleash on his foes such things as would be the terrors of the Earth, without quite knowing what they should be. The result is a seepage of power, authority and now dignity.

Mr Yeltsin's appeal for support from Communists follows his surprise appearance on Sunday at a meeting of the centre-conservative Civic Union at which he attempted to bring the group on to his side to ward off any challenge from extreme nationalists and communist forces.

A former senior party functionary, Mr Yeltsin is despised with particular intensity by old party members who think he betrayed them by abandoning the Soviet Union, turning to Western free-market ideals and, worst of all, declaring their organisation illegal. The constitutional court revoked the ban last year.

□ Fleet faces cut: Russia's Baltic fleet, which lost its key bases after the collapse of the Soviet Union, is to be cut by almost 40 per cent. Admiral Vladimir Yegorov, the fleet's commander, said yesterday in *Krasnaya Zvezda* that a brigade of outdated missile submarines, which form the backbone of the 240-warship fleet, would be scrapped this year. Other submarines will be pulled out from bases in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, he added.

Pavel Grachev, the Russian defence minister, said yesterday that he was sacking commanders after four conscripts in the Pacific died from malnutrition. Dozens of conscripts were hospitalised last month with infections linked to malnutrition. (Reuters)



Word from above: President Clinton embracing Makia Tomlinson before telling students at Rutgers University in New Jersey about his voluntary service idea

Britain and America warn travellers to Middle East

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

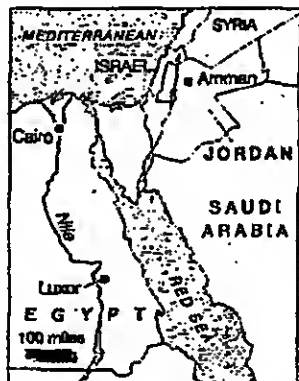
BRITAIN and America yesterday issued warnings about two of the most popular Arab destinations for Western tourists. Diplomatic sources said the timing of the announcements — Britain's on Egypt and America's on Jordan — was "coincidental". Both were related, however, to an upsurge of Islamic terrorism in which Western tourists have become targets.

After last Friday's Cairo bomb blast, in which two tourists were killed and eight injured by suspected members of the militant Islamic Group, Britons were reminded that more attacks were threatened after a British nurse was killed in a bus ambush in Upper Egypt last year. "The Egyptian authorities are giving the highest priority to protecting visitors, and tourist buses are given armed escorts in parts of the country, but 100 per cent security cannot be guaranteed," said the Foreign Office.

Washington was more specific, warning Americans in Jordan that there was a "heightened threat at this time of terrorism" and instructing them to remain in close touch with the embassy in Amman.

Western diplomats said that the advice appeared to follow a specific threat, made known to American intelligence, of a new campaign being planned against tourists similar to that being waged in Egypt since last summer.

Islamic fundamentalists in the Jordanian parliament have attacked "cheap tourism"



and tried to ban alcohol and implement other aspects of Islamic law. But anti-Western feeling, strong during the Gulf war, seems to have faded.

The British communiqué reminded visitors to all Arab countries "to behave and dress discreetly" and specifically told visitors to avoid the Upper Egyptian town of Dairut, a hotbed of fundamentalism which has seen repeated attacks by militants on tourists and the Coptic Christian minority.

The struggle between the Egyptian security forces and Muslim militants, including many trained during the Afghan war, transformed areas of Upper Egypt into a virtual battleground. Yesterday a policeman shot and wounded a suspected militant while searching his house 25 miles south of Dairut.

The government crackdown intensified after the killing of the nurse last October, and more than 1,500 Islamic suspects have since been de-

ported, including a number of juveniles under 12. Cane fields, from which ambushes against tourists were mounted, have been razed, and in a new, Israeli-style punishment the family homes of some Islamic suspects destroyed.

Last year 80 people died in the upsurge of extremism designed to overthrow the government, and 11 more have been killed this year. In Cairo a security dragnet has been introduced in the wake of last Friday's blast. Hotels have locked side doors, hundreds of plain-clothes security men have been sent to mingle with the dwindling number of visitors, and identity cards are being checked at historic sites.

□ Jerusalem: An Israeli driver was killed in the Gaza Strip yesterday after he lost his way and was stranded in the Rafah refugee camp. Palestinians said (Ben Lyndell writes).

The man died hours after troops sealed off entrances to Israel in reprisal for a killing in Tel Aviv on Monday by a Gaza City resident that killed two Israelis and wounded nine others. Army officials did not specify the length of the closure, which prevents 30,000 Palestinians from working in Israel.

The violence sparked renewed debate in the government about whether Israel should end its 26-year occupation of the Gaza Strip. "We have no business being in Gaza," said Chaim Ramon, the health minister, echoing the views of many Israelis.

Clinton refuses to sound retreat on reforms package

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton was due to confront some of his fiercest critics head-on yesterday when he met Republican leaders in Congress to discuss his economic package.

The White House has conceded that individual elements of the \$500 billion (\$347 billion) package in spending cuts and tax rises may be open for discussion, and if necessary renegotiation, but the president would not allow an erosion of overall parameters. He has ruled out a retreat from his commitment to cut the budget deficit to about \$200 billion by 1997, compared with a forecast \$325 billion this year. Nor will he retreat from a commitment to shift the pattern of expenditure towards investment and structural reform, notably in the health sector.

Republican endorsement of his proposals is not vital, since the Democrats control Congress. But a degree of support is useful because wavering Democrats could endanger the majority and because it offers an opportunity to exploit the divisions within the Republican party on the question of economic policy.

Republican leaders have disagreed on how best to respond to Mr Clinton's package. Phil Gramm, a Texas senator and one of the best-known budget hawks, said that he will propose an amendment which sets out to cut all the \$178 billion in planned spending increases and to reduce the proposed tax rises by an equivalent amount. Robert Dole of Kansas, the Senate Republican leader, only wants to go halfway, while the supply-siders, led by Jack Kemp, the former housing secretary and a possible Republican presidential candidate for 1996, argue for actual tax cuts to stimulate the economy.

Mr Dole has adopted an unusually conciliatory tone towards the Clinton administration. Speaking on breakfast television, he said: "If we can reduce some of the spending, we can eliminate some of the taxes... it might attract some Republican support." This is a far cry from the "tax-and-spend Democrat" accusations levied against Mr Clinton in the immediate aftermath of his State of the Union address to Congress almost two weeks ago.

This apparent softening comes amid signs that the president continues to enjoy strong popular support.

A Washington Post-ABC poll published yesterday showed that 55 per cent approve of Mr Clinton's economic policy, while 61 per cent think that he is "a new-style Democrat" who will be careful with the public's money. His foreign policy enjoys even stronger support, but this probably reflects indifference.

The White House and congressional Democrats are also considering combining the economic package with the health care reform programme, which requires additional taxation, most notably on tobacco. While this would amount to the single largest tax rise passed by Congress, it would avoid the potential embarrassment of voting to raise taxes twice in one year.

US justices tackle sex guidelines

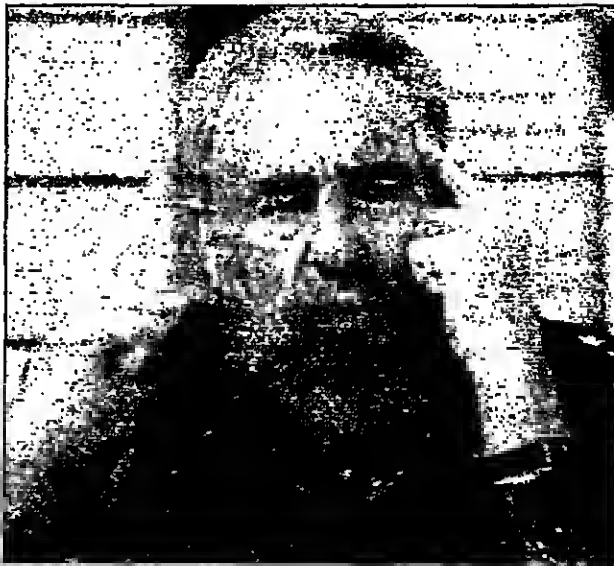
FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE US Supreme Court will try to define sexual harassment at work, a subject which has become one of America's most contentious social issues.

The nine justices have agreed to consider the case of a Tennessee woman, Teresa Harris, who resigned from her job as manager of a firm selling forklift trucks because she objected to dirty jokes and sexist comments by the owner. The court must decide whether his behaviour amounted to sexual harassment or whether the victim must prove "severe psychological injury" to win her lawsuit.

Ms Harris is appealing against lower court rulings that she did not suffer psychological damage from the behaviour of her employer, Charles Hardy, even though he made sexual remarks about her clothing, asked her to retrieve coins from his front trouser pockets, and joked about "going to a Holiday Inn" with her to negotiate her next pay increase.

Castro soldiers on



Pointing to the left: a tired-looking President Castro declaring on Cuban television that the national and provincial elections on February 24, in which all official candidates were elected unopposed and he won 99.6 per cent of the vote, were clean and a "referendum for socialism". In Havana, 15 per cent of the ballots were spoilt, against 7 per cent elsewhere. "There was not the slightest hint of fraud," Señor Castro said. The national assembly meets on March 15 to pick a president. (AFP)

Russian miners threaten strike

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN MOSCOW

IN A development reminiscent of the last years of Mikhail Gorbachev's presidency, more than 100,000 Russian miners have begun to launch strikes in support of demands for better pay and more investment in their industry.

Miners are already among the best paid workers in Russia, with salaries six times the national average, but they have the economy by the throat. A full national strike is scheduled for March 10 if the government fails to bow to the miners' demands.

The chief area of miners' discontent is currently in the north Russian area of Vorkuta, above the Arctic Circle. Last month several hundred miners at the huge Vorkuta mine spent several days on strike underground in protest at the arrest of Ivan Guridov, their leader, for allegedly slandering the plant manager. A battle for control of the mine between rival managers, apparently owing allegiance to different political forces, lies behind the strike.

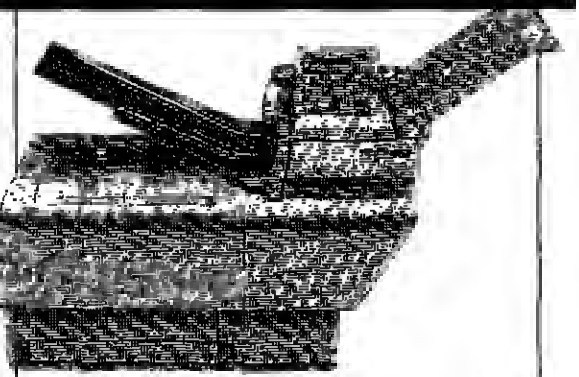
Yesterday and Monday a 24-hour strike shut down about a quarter of Russia's pits

in Vorkuta and the Siberian Kuzbas region. In the Kuzbas, rail shipments of coal were briefly blocked. The miners are demanding higher wages, pensions and social insurance funds index-linked to Russia's rocketing inflation, something economists see as a recipe for self-perpetuating inflation.

Typical of the anarchic state of Russian politics is the fact that the managers and even the energy ministry are supporting the strike in an effort to force the state to give the industry more money. A spokesman for the energy ministry declared that "we support our miners... The problem is that they have not been paid on time." He said the ministry is negotiating with the finance ministry and state bank to release more funds. Parliament's control over the central bank means the miners are negotiating separately with government and parliament.

Russia's energy shortages mean that the miners have a powerful lever. Oil production is forecast to drop this year to barely 340 million tonnes from 395 million last year. The government fears that by 1995 Russia may not be able to cover its domestic needs, leading to a catastrophic drop in foreign earnings and a further decline for the oil-dependent republics.

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Japanese mobsters take police to court over harassment

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN TOKYO

These were no ordinary plaintiffs. It was plain to see. Pug-nosed and shaven-headed, the three men swaggered into the Kobe district court yesterday, their silk-sweathed chests puffed out as they threw hideous leers at television cameramen. Two were accompanied by a posse of bodyguards in ivory-coloured suits and dark glasses; the third paced the five yards from Cadillac to court with a sleek, fur-draped woman on his arm.

No bystander was left in any doubt about their profession. These gentlemen were the public face of the 30,000-strong Yamaguchi-gumi, the largest yakuza gang, and leading lights in Japan's equivalent of the Mafia. Thanks to the high degree of traditional police tolerance of gangster activities, Yamaguchi-gumi members are not accustomed to appearing in court.

But yesterday they came of their own will, not to stand in the dock but to accuse the police of unfair discrimination. Their group has been officially classified as an underworld organisation according to a new anti-gang law, and they see this as a slur on their heroic Robin Hood image. Nor is the Yamaguchi-gumi's treasury department pleased, for the underworld label is playing havoc with its designs on legitimate property, stockbroking and golf-course development businesses.

The gang's lawyers, who have fallen into line with the distinctive fashions favoured by their paymasters, argued that the new legislation is redundant and unnecessary. Introduced a year ago, it makes extortion, money-laundering, gun-running and other lucrative mainstays of the yakuza career path illegal for the first time.

But considering the penalties (a year in jail or a fine of £4,000) for errant mobsters,

it appears that the law is intended more as a warning than a preventive measure. In return for keeping hard drugs out of Japan, maintaining "unorganised crime" at minimum levels, and keeping inter-gang violence off the streets, the yakuza have been able, in the diplomat's favourite phrase, to live in comfortable coexistence with the law.

The "criminal" designation, however, clearly remains an irritant to the mobsters. Since they diversified into stockbroking and other businesses, acquired a voracious appetite for capitalism, and grew fat and greedy on Japan's burgeoning wealth in the late 1980s, the economy has shrivelled and the gangsters are being forced, like all of corporate Japan, to tighten their belts.

In the fight for survival, some gang bosses are being reduced to daily visits to the local pinball arcade to raise operating funds, ac-

cording to the *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper. Others are emulating the nation's political leaders and throwing fund-raising parties.

For a public that still tends to cling to the old romantic image of the modest and heroic yakuza, remaining at worst ambivalent about their contemporary underworld activities as long as they are kept to themselves, the news this week of two senior gangster suicides came as a jolt. The two men were venerable bosses of small "third-tier" gangs, stung by the sluggish economy and overwhelmed by debts, probably doled out by their avaricious underworld brothers.

Judging by the sympathetic tone of television coverage of the deaths, the yakuza have lost no ground in the public relations game.

As if the combination of the anti-gang law and the economic slowdown were not enough, Japan's gangsters sense another legislative battle looming. The National

Police Agency is reportedly considering a revision of the law this year, and are proposing outlawing two traditional underworld rituals — lopping off the little finger to atone for a blunder and tattooing the entire body with lurid and intricate dragon and flower designs to display true grit and endurance. Both bans would be designed to wipe out the physical distinctions of which the yakuza are so proud, and thereby to ease the reintegration of young or uncommitted gangsters back into polite society.

In view of the incompetence that the severed finger revealed, the yakuza are remarkably proud of their fingerless stumps, even more so given that they have such a disastrous effect on their golf swings.

The tattoo is equally a source of pride, and a means of identity in a country where office workers like to be recognised by their Tyrolean suits, intellectuals by their black berets, and housewives

by the aprons they wear to visit the shops. The most sought-after designer tattoos are known as canvases and are signed by nationally acclaimed tattoo artists, such as Bonten Taro, who operates from a tiny garret flat in north Tokyo.

Short of demanding atoning substitution for every sawn-off finger, and some sort of revolutionary tattoo-removal operation, the police will find the enforcement of such a ban, if they insist on going ahead with it, extremely tricky. The two offences may go the way of other yakuza crimes and end up being studiously ignored by the police for the sake of harmony.

Debt diplomacy: A senior official at the foreign ministry in Tokyo, discussing the huge American trade deficit with Japan, joked yesterday that the United States could be made eligible for Japanese aid, the Kyodo News Service said. (AP)

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arms package

Forgotten victims of Balkan nationalism take refuge in Serbia



Tito: seen as symbol of a multi-ethnic ideal

FROM ADAM LEBOR IN BELGRADE

WHEN fighting erupted in Mostar last spring and the artillery of the Yugoslav federal army began its systematic destruction of the picturesque Bosnian town, Radmilla, a Bosnian Serb, covered the walls of her home there with pictures of Tito.

For Radmilla, a 33-year-old lawyer, now a refugee from the Bosnian war with her family in Belgrade, to take shelter from the bombardment under Tito's gaze with her Muslim and Croat neighbours was a defiant gesture that a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia could survive. Even though her husband was an officer in the Yugoslav army, which was pounding their home town from the other side of the Neretva river, Radmilla promised herself that she would stay in Mostar and that she would never bow to the forces of nationalism.

"All through the war I tried to keep my identity as a person, not by nationality or religion," Radmilla said. But as various Bosnian Croat militias stomped their way through their house, arresting her and taking away her neighbours, it soon became clear that she could no longer stay in Mostar with her family.

"I never felt like a Serb but they decided for me. I did not want to leave my city and my friends," Radmilla said.

However, Radmilla's gallery of Tito portraits was merely a quixotic protest. Nothing could stop the awful inevitability of the Bosnian war and both she and her husband fled last October

from Mostar, by then firmly under Bosnian Croat and Bosnian army control.

While world attention focuses on the plight of the hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Croats made homeless in the wars ravaging the former Yugoslavia, many Serbs who have also lost everything say they are the forgotten victims.

"How can you decide what to pack when you flee from your home?" asked Radmilla. "Should you pack the slippers your baby first walked in, or the ones he needs now? The furniture we left behind is not important but the memories

are. The world is closing its eyes to the Serbs in camps and Serb refugees, pretending this is a tragedy only for Croats and Muslims."

More than 460,000 refugees have fled to Serbia, including 250,000 from Bosnia, according to the Serbian Red Cross, and another 80,000 refugees are living in Montenegro. While many refugees in Croatia and Bosnia spend their days sleeping on schoolroom floors or cramped into unhygienic refugee camps, more than 95 per cent of Serb refugees are living in other people's houses.

"It's very unusual for so

many refugees to be accommodated with families," said Srdjana Dimic, a spokeswoman for the Serbian Red Cross. "We help trace their relatives and try to provide them with food, medical care and clothes."

The sanctions against Yugoslavia stopped sufficient food and medical supplies getting through to the refugees, said Ms Dimic. "We get help through international aid organisations like the Red Cross but we don't get any bilateral aid from other countries. We lack medicines, vaccines, food and baby milk."

However, not all Serbs have shown hospitality to the refugees from Bosnia. Many refugees say that they are discriminated against when they apply for jobs, with employers telling them that they fear they will be robbed if they

employ someone who has lost everything. Radmilla said: "When I apply for jobs even as a secretary and they hear my Bosnian accent, they put a little mark on the application form and nobody even asks to see my lawyer's qualifications. Employers tell me that they don't take on refugees out of principle."

Radmilla's two children, aged eight and nine, know they are seen as outsiders. When one pupil in her daughter's class had a birthday party at McDonald's, three children were not invited: Radmilla's daughter and two refugee children from Sarajevo.

"She is eight years old, but she understands what is going on," said Radmilla. "I knew what to expect from the extremist Croats and Serbs, but not from these others. I thought we would be treated

differently. We lost our property and our houses, but not our humanity."

□ **Bucharest:** The rump state of Yugoslavia has lifted a week-long blockade near a frontier dam on the Danube which stranded at least 22 ships in ports, a Romanian official said yesterday.

Romania and Bulgaria had sought support from the UN Security Council to deal with the blockade. "We instructed our team at the United Nations to lodge at the security council a document asking for its support to solve the Serb blockade on the Danube," the Romanian foreign ministry said. The Bulgarian foreign ministry said the blockade was an unacceptable retaliation against UN sanctions and a violation of the Danube convention guaranteeing free navigation. (Reuters)

Izetbegovic returns to talks

Town targeted for aid drop 'falls to Serbs'

BY JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

PRESIDENT Izetbegovic of Bosnia turned to the international peace talks yesterday. As he did so, Lord Owen, the European Community mediator, gave a warning that Bosnia-Herzegovina could face disintegration if the negotiations fail.

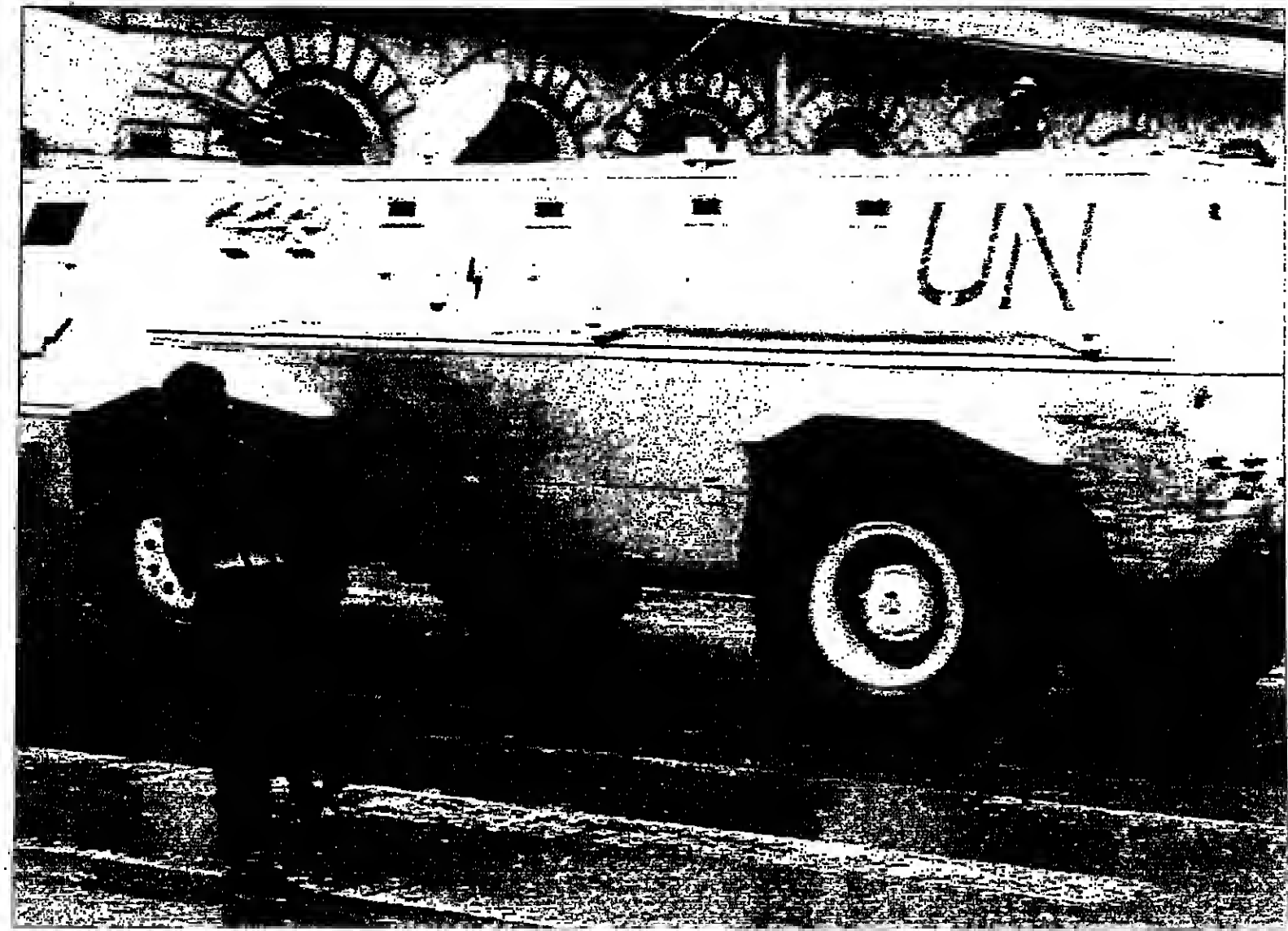
Arriving at the United Nations headquarters in New York to meet the international mediators, Mr Izetbegovic condemned the renewed Serb offensive on the strategic eastern Bosnian town of Cerska, the target of the first American aid drops. "I am going to tell [the negotiators] that, while we are talking, Serbia launches a new offensive against people in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said. He added that this was "incompatible" with the peace talks.

He was responding to reports of a fresh Serbian offensive against east Bosnian Muslims. There were claims last night that Cerska had fallen to the Serb offensive. Some reports said Serb forces were moving freely through the settlement.

"Chetniks [Serb rebels] are walking freely through Cerska, looting homes and driving away spoils in lorries," Muslim-controlled Sarajevo radio said. It quoted reports from amateur radio operators that Serb fighters were shelling the routes by which people were fleeing the town, which has been besieged since the Bosnian Serbs rebelled last April against the country's declaration of independence from the former Yugoslavia.

"The roads are crawling with injured and dead," the radio said. The broadcast did not say outright that the town, where UN aid officials say 20,000 to 30,000 Muslims have been trapped without outside help, had been captured.

Commander Barry Frewer, spokesman for the UN Protection Force in Sarajevo, said the Serbs had entered the main Cerska settlement after fierce fighting but he, too, could not say categorically that the town had fallen. "We have confirmed that ten to 12 villages in the vicinity are burning," Cdr Frewer said. "The Serbs are in the area of Cerska



Vehicle for protest: a youth throwing a stone at a passing United Nations armoured personnel carrier in Sarajevo. A media campaign, launched by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees last week, aimed to stop such attacks on its convoys in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Luck remains in short supply for US planes

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

OPERATION Provide Promise, the codename for the American air drop mission over eastern Bosnia, continues to rely on pilot skills, friendly wind and luck. The luck element is in short supply.

The grid reference of the expected landing points and the estimated time of launch are passed to refugee workers in Bosnia. But the drops are at night and from an altitude reported to be 10,000ft, so the references have provided only a general indication of where the aid might be found.

However, American satellite photography should be able to pinpoint the spot where all packages have fallen, using heat-imaging techniques. Each bundle of supplies is fitted with chemical lights.

Of the nine packages dropped near Cerska early on Monday, four apparently landed about three-quarters of a mile from the target. American sources said the other five were further afield. Satellite pictures showed none had been retrieved.

Once the green light devices are extinguished, the chances of finding the supplies become more remote. Even in a more benign environment, the search for the packages would be difficult because of the thickly forested terrain and snowdrifts of up to 9ft.

However, in a hostile region, where drop zones can be overrun by Serbs, grid references are of little value. This is what happened at Cerska.

The Hercules crews for the second air drop used the same operational methods. Three aircraft dropped the packages near the town of Zepa. The Muslims found two bundles with medicine but no food.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ceausescu aide is to be freed
Bucharest: Romania's supreme court has ruled that Ion Coman, a top communist official, should be released from prison for four months on health grounds. He was jailed in 1991 for the massacre of almost 100 people during the 1989 uprising that led to the toppling and execution of Ceausescu, the former dictator.

Judge Victoria Ciobanu said Ceausescu's military adviser was not medically fit to serve the rest of his 25-year sentence in Jilava prison for "aggravated murder". (Reuters)

Ferry tragedy
Brazzaville: At least 146 Zaireans drowned while being expelled as illegal immigrants from neighbouring Congo. The ferry pulled away from the quay too soon, while people were being pushed on board. (Reuters)

Iraq unchecked
Geneva: Iraqi forces carried out "mass arbitrary killings" in the southern marshes despite the allied no-fly zone, according to a UN human rights investigator, who spoke of rights violations "of the gravest nature". (AFP)

Rights warning
Washington: The recent release of leading dissidents in China was little more than a smoke screen aimed at deflecting criticism of a new round of political repression, Asia Watch said. (AFP)

Family killed
Brussels: Ferdinand Abraham, 52, a policeman questioned about an attack on a child by his eight dogs, shot dead his mother, wife and two teenage children before killing himself near Huy, Belgium. (Reuters)

Somalia vow
Mogadishu: US forces may have to stay in Somalia in large numbers for another two months before the United Nations takes command of military operations, a military spokesman said. (Reuters)

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Italian MPs weigh Craxi's fate in corruption scandal

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE Italian chamber of deputies was examining yesterday whether to lift the parliamentary immunity of Bettino Craxi, the former Socialist leader, and so open the way for corruption proceedings against him.

The latest casualty of the corruption investigation is Ciriaco De Mita, chairman of the parliamentary committee preparing electoral reforms, who resigned after the arrest of his brother, Signor De Mita, a former prime minister and former Christian Democrat party chairman, said he was concerned that his work at the committee could be undermined by fraud charges against his brother. Michele, over reconstruction work following the 1980 Naples earthquake.

The committee on constitutional reform was set up last year to try to satisfy popular demands for reform of the proportional representation system, widely considered a source of political instability. Committee members from most mainstream parties urged Signor De Mita to withdraw his resignation.

Yesterday the cabinet of Giuliano Amato, the prime minister, gave broad approval to proposals by the justice minister, Giovanni Conso, to try to bring the scandal under control. Full details of the plan will not be known until the end of the week. Signor Amato is proceeding cautiously to avoid offending public opinion, which is opposed to a general amnesty. But Signor Conso is known to believe that those who confess and pay back bribes should not necessarily face imprisonment, although they would still be banned from public office. Opposition leaders are concerned lest the government try to push the package through parliament by decree.

A 20-member committee of the lower house is expected to decide later this week on the application by magistrates for Signor Craxi's immunity to be lifted. If it rejects the former prime minister's defence, the full chamber of MPs must approve the decision by a majority. Signor Craxi is under investigation in connection with £15 million alleged to have been paid as bribes to his party in return for public works contracts.



De Mita: his brother's arrest led him to quit

JUST HOW A HOUSE BUILT ON THE first experiment, in 1930, could not even depend upon emphasized that local materi-

The great European banana split

Latin American bananas have so far entered markets such as Germany in unlimited amounts, and duty-free to boot. As of July, the Latin American fruit will become subject to a 20 per cent tariff on up to 2 million tonnes per year, about 400,000 tonnes below current levels. Any additional imports from the Latin Americans — the world's

banana is not without influential supporters. The World Bank, in a study of the EC plan, concluded that the import regime Europe sought was grossly inefficient and would generate monopoly profits for importers and distributors. The bank estimated that, for every dollar of aid the banana arrangement produced for the Caribbean



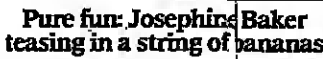
growers is likely to cause a catastrophe. Western efforts to curtail the drugs trade, fighting a new wave of hard drugs from Latin America would make the new rules on bananas a very costly affair and put the European authorities back on the sidelines. A Social Democratic spokesman even called the new regime a "programme to promote the production of cocaine".

Even the near-scarred Franco-German axis appears to be under pressure. Klaus Kinkel, Germany's usually cautious foreign minister, last week warned Paris that Bonn was not going to let protectionism over the banana spread into other areas. Germany, he said, doubtless with a fat "dollar" banana in mind, had shown solidarity with France "to the point of self-denial".

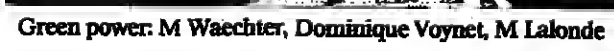
COLIN NARBROUGH

COLIN NARBROUGH

NICK LEZARD



CHARLES
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has been whether M Lalonde

power-broking position. It is

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CHARLES
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Rosie Millard on the answer to vegetarian prayers: an acceptable non-leather shoe



New image: Robin Webb and his Vegetarian Shoes in Brighton. The whole enterprise might have failed had it not been for a chance encounter when he was hitch-hiking

Treat for the feet if you don't eat meat

For the fashion-conscious yet responsible vegetarian, the question of leather apparel is sometimes a little tricky to wriggle out of. "Don't eat meat," quines the carnivore. "Ha!", they grin triumphantly. "What about leather shoes?" Since the alternatives to leather are likely to be canvas shoes which leave feet frozen in winter, or plastic, rendering them odorously unacceptable in summer, and since both are likely to be as strict as the veggie, the stylish veggie is usually forced to abandon finer morals and join the rest of us in footwear made of dead animal skins.

However, the end could be in sight for angst-ridden lentil eaters: Robin Webb's Vegetarian Shoes, clad in a completely man-made, yet nose-friendly polyurethane, have arrived in a small Brighton shop and are currently enabling a growing band of vegetarians to shake their politically correct feet with pride and style.

With such a name-tag, the worse excesses of the 1970s immediately spring to mind: yet Jesus Boots these are not. Vegetarian Shoes are designed for Mr Webb by Dr Martens, and come in a range of hip styles and colours about as far away from middle-aged ponchos and jost-sticks as possible. Indeed, so is their inventor, strictly speaking only a nascent vegetarian ("pressure from my girlfriend"), the clean-shaven, pony-tailed and fairly youthful Mr Webb actually started off in leather footwear before he saw the light.

"After I left school, I began with a pair of shoes made with old car tyres for soles," he says. "I then started making shoes to order: cutting leather

jackets and lashing them onto the soles." But this began to prove unworkable within a short space of time, and Mr Webb began to feel his conscience pricking.

And so he began to search for a vegetable alternative: after a while, he came across a man-made material which seemed to be the answer to his dreams. To finance a production line for it, he worked as a labourer, for a year, saving £6,000, by driving lorries, carting rubbish and working in factories. He was so convinced his idea would take off that he never discussed it with anyone for fear they would steal it. However, returning from a week's walking holiday in Skye, he accepted a hitch as a man driving from Milton Keynes to London and ended up telling him about his idea. "I wasn't going to tell this guy about my plan, but I suddenly decided to do so," Mr Webb says. "He knew of another man-made fabric, a better one, that I should use."

That chance meeting was the catalyst for success: his original choice of material, when tried out, proved

totally impractical. "It was far too thin. If I had gone through with it, my business would have flopped," Mr Webb says.

The man driving from Milton Keynes had suggested a light polyurethane material which was porous, yet shower-proof, scuff-resistant, yet

teenage girls." Indeed, some of his customers are the complete opposite to the idea of the vegetarian as passive, nut cutter muncher: another much-requested style is the steel-toed, high leg military boot, and Vegetarian Shoes might, according to Mr Webb, some day market the Vegetarian Biker Jacket "for the tough, tattooed veggie".

Vegetarians of all descriptions have fallen upon this personalised footwear with cries of relief. "You see them come in wearing ripped-up old canvas shoes. They are so pleased when they see our range"

You see them come in wearing ripped-up old canvas shoes. They are so pleased when they see our range

shop. "We never sell to non-veggers," says assistant Carlos Martinez. "A lot of people are still brainwashed into the idea that leather equals quality, even though our shoes are in many ways better than leather. You won't get meat-eaters paying our prices for what they think are plastic shoes; whereas vegetarians might have already made the commitment not to use leather."

And the product does seem to offer more than just moral satisfaction, from fairly close inspection, the shoes seem to be much the same as leather. Even committed vegans used to condemning leather at a distance of a few paces are sometimes fooled.

A Vegetarian Shoes, trendy, black-clad Brightonians mill around, trying on the famous Air-Wair boots. "We might not have any purple ones left by Saturday," Mr Webb warns them. It is clear that he feels something of a torch-bearer in the vegetarian world. "I want to communicate to vegetarians nationwide. I was on The Steve Wright Show, which was good; but I want to get onto The Clothes Show. This is the product for 1993: the world owes me advertising space," he says.

Mr Webb (whose only message to the anonymous Milton Keynes driver who gave him his winning formula was "Thanks for the lift") has yet to conquer one slight marketing problem. "We want to bring out a classic Dr Martens colour for our boots. The only thing is, it's called Oxblood. I'm a bit nervous about using this name, but I suppose it might make a good line in the press: you know: Vegetarian makes a Killing! Get it?"

Homes for families not feminists

The Design Museum is celebrating 70 years of Ideal Home ideas

What do women want? That is a question which has been posed many times in varying contexts, though perhaps never so exhaustively as in 1951 when the organisers of the Ideal Home Exhibition asked the 4.5 million members of the country's Women's Institutes to tell them exactly what was necessary and desirable in a contemporary family house.

The result was an avalanche of completed questionnaires, more than 400,000, which did not at all surprise the co-ordinator of the WI committee, Pleydell Bouverie, whose task it was to dovetail all the members' requirements into a comprehensible blueprint, so that the house of their dreams could be built as the centrepiece of that year's exhibition. "Housing is a woman's business," she said at the time. "She has to make a home of the houses men build."

A forthcoming Design Museum retrospective of the Ideal Home Exhibition's 70-year history explains that this was not the first time women had been consulted en masse as to just how a house should be. The first experiment, in 1930,



Modern Mrs: the very latest in kitchen gadgetry for the affluent 1930s woman

the basic services of mains water, electricity and drainage. The WI set out with gusto to change all that.

If practicality and economy were the key, these constraints certainly did not translate themselves into dullness. The colour schemes, by all accounts, were eye-jarringly jolly, and the members overwhelmingly voted against some ersatz Tudorbethan look in favour of a truly 1930s design.

The house built for the 1951 show had random stone cladding, claspboard, rendering and exposed brick. It was emphasised that local materi-

developers for years to come. Lady Brunner chaired the WI committee in 1951; now in her eighties, and still active within the federation, she remembers well the driving force to get the house built, and to get the house right. "We were a hardy lot after the war, so we didn't really want central heating and all the rest of it — and virtually none of us

What was vital was a clean, bright, affordable house for a working family

worked, so we had time to grow vegetables and can fruit and so on.

"What was vital was a clean, bright, affordable house for a working family. We were all so sick of old and dirty things that simply didn't do the job. It was nice to be listened to."

Does Lady Brunner see herself and her membership as having struck a prescriptive blow for feminism? "I should rather like to think not," she says. "I'm not too hot on feminism. It's families that are important, not feminism."

JOSEPH CONNOLLY

Ideal Homes is at the Design Museum, Batters Wharf, London SE1 2YD, from March 9 until August 22

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It's a man's life in leggings



ALICE THOMSON

When Sting asked the model and designer Marie Helvin to design him some crushed velvet leggings for his forthcoming tour, he did so confident that he would be the only man in the auditorium with the guts to wear them.

However, only a couple of hundred years ago, male leggings were the rule rather than the exception. Women's legs were hidden beneath swaths of petticoats. Men had a monopoly of bodily display from the waist down. They flaunted ankle, calf, taut thigh, buttock and aggressive bulge during most periods of western history.

It is only in this century that hosiery was left to women, ballet dancers and Scotsmen, and women took every advantage of it. A show of leg became a feminine trait. Skirts got shorter and shorter, until five years ago they disappeared into leggings under the auspices of Romeo Gigli. He used them to define legs under big jackets in much the same way as Henry VIII used fine silk hosiery under his doublet, jerkin and gown.

Karl Lagerfeld and Azzedine Alaïa pun their skinny models into leggings and Lycra stopped the rest of us from popping out of them. A mass market in leggings was born and, in defiance of the fashion guru, they have not been consigned to the back of the wardrobe with the shoulder pads. They cover a multitude of sins and you don't have to show your tummy button to look sexy.

All this versatility, all this enthusiasm, has not gone unnoticed. Men, ever concerned that women should have no unfair advantages in the war of the sexes, have been slowly inching their way towards Lycra. The male bottom came into public view at the end of the 1980s with the advent of the courier cyclist, and the lurch towards leggings had begun.

What could be more perfect for a well-toned man than a pair of sexy knit Joseph leggings carefully co-

Few men have curvaceous legs, even fewer have good knees

ordinated for the occasion? Purple for daytime leisurewear, classic black to go with the dinner jacket, and slimming pin stripes for the office.

But before men take the plunge and invest in a new wardrobe they should ask themselves why it was that their ancestors gave up the opportunity to show off their legs. Leggings, in common with other things, tend to sag and when they do it is in all the wrong places and at all the wrong moments. The answer may have to be a cad piece — "a bag covering the male genitals" — made to order by your tailor (original measurements strictly confidential). And if you have heard girls complaining about their "panty-line", boxer lines are far worse. If you want to be smooth you will have to hang loose. And then there is the urinal test. Leggings don't have zips.

Which ever way you look at it, male leggings aren't an easy option. For the sake of showing off your legs now, you may be sacrificing the opportunity of passing them in the future. A lot of Lycra may prove incompatible with a high sperm count.

For some men it might be worth it, but anyone wanting to invest in a pair should buy a full-length mirror. Few men have curvaceous legs, even fewer have good knees and hardly any have delicate ankles (Marie Helvin has tried to solve the problem by making the leggings loose and a little flared at the bottom).

The few men who would look good in leggings — Mick Jagger or Sting for instance — are easily outnumbered by those who wouldn't. Will Carling, Norman Lamont and Luciano Pavarotti, to name a smattering.

Worst of all for a British man, he may be accused of being a fashion victim. Remember Malvolvo with his yellow stockings and cross garters. Unless you can wear them with sufficient nonchalance — don't.

Sarah Mower is on holiday.



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Alan Coren



I was happy once until my accountant suggested a smart career move to Schedule D

John Bin's face was made for what has just happened to him. It is a little round face, and it was made for beaming. It is like that little round face, that used to beam from T-shirts in the sweet lang syne, urging us to have a nice day, when there were still nice days to be had.

You will say: hang on, why should John's little round face do what it was made for doing at that very moment when his change of BBC status from freelance to staffer will cost him £25,000 per annum, surely that is the son of a gun which wipes beams off? That is because you do not realise that the £25,000 was never spent: even John may not realise it yet, but he soon will, at which point the beam on his little round face will join his ears together. For he will have discovered that money can buy happiness.

I was happy, once. For a quarter of a century, editing this and that, I was a corporate employee. I was given a salary, and, at the end of each month, I would give some of it to the Inland Revenue: I paid as I earned. I could also relax as I paid as I earned, because I knew where I stood, and furthermore, after I had stopped standing, I could sleep as I paid as I earned. But five years ago, this happy state came to an end. I gave up editing this and that in order to take up writing this and that: I thus became a freelance. My accountant said this was a smart career move, and he was absolutely right: his career could not have taken a smarter one. Suddenly, he was in a position to save me enough money to pay him much more for saving it: by moving from PAYE to Schedule D, I got to keep all my annual money until April 6, when the Inland Revenue came round for all theirs, at which point my accountant hurled his gallant little body between us, thereby earning all his. This would've been fine had I actually been saving mine, but it turned out that the only way I could save mine was to spend it. Not only did I have to spend it to save it, I had to earn more so that I would have it to spend on saving it.

Since I may be in danger of losing you, let me open my garage. Oh look, there is a new car in it. It gets a new car in it every two years, because as a freelance hack I am allowed to set part of the purchase price of a new car off against tax, so I have to ensure that I keep doing enough freelance hackery to keep buying new cars, otherwise I cannot set off against tax part of the money I spend on buying them. That I do not want a new car every two years is, apparently, neither here nor there.

Let us close my garage and open my wardrobe. Oh, look, ten nice suits for wearing on television. I do not like wearing suits, but you have to wear suits on the sort of television I do, so despite the fact that I like doing television even less than I like wearing suits, I have to do more television every year to earn the money to buy the suits so that my accountant can set the suits against the tax levied on the income I get for doing television. I don't want to do in suits I don't want to wear. Never mind striped shirts and spotted bloody ties. And never mind new word-processors, office cleaning, secretarial services, etc. How all this came about I do not know, because I am not as smart as my accountant.

Who also makes me go to places I do not want to go to, because he has established my entitlement to go to them and set the expenses off against tax, and this represents a tax-savings to me. In his right mind, I would pass up. If you do not know how right a mind can get, that is because you have not read *Gaul Bladder*, my book about drinking your way around France: you have not read *Gaul Bladder* because I haven't written it yet, all I have done is drink my way around France, so that I can set off the expenses for doing it against the advance I was given for writing about it, but the trouble is I have gone off the idea and will have to give the advance back, whereupon the Revenue may ask for the return of the deductions they allowed against the earnings I haven't made. My accountant will, mind, give them a run for their money, because that is how he gets a run for his. Mine, of course, just runs.

While I spend much of my working life trying not to think about it running, I wish I was John. All John needs to think about running, now is the BBC. See John run. Run, John. Run, Beam, John, beam.



Peter Brookes 3/III/93

Major's mid-term blues

It is easy to forget that Mrs Thatcher was in as much trouble with party and country in 1981 as her successor is today

In a famously nasty torture, the victim is submerged in freezing water until near drowning, then dragged out and asked to confess to various crimes. If he refuses, he is plunged back in the bath. This continues until he loses all sense of right and wrong and confesses to anything.

John Major must feel like that. He emerges from each week thoroughly sodden, wrung out and apparently unsure what confession, or at least volte-face, is required of him. He murmurs some unmemorable soundbite and his critics promptly fall on him with rubber runches and he disappears back under water. It must be awful. But how awful really is it? This man is prime minister at a difficult point in Britain's post-war history. We do, as the saying goes, need to know if he is up to the job.

There are two methods of approaching this apparently momentous question. One is rooted in the "old-fashioned" history and concentrates on dates, facts and historical trends. The other approach, the "new" history, leads students inside a historical event and encourages them to take sides. Most contemporary analysis of Mr Major derives from the latter approach. It is strong on partisanship and feels no need of long-term context. It seeks to participate in events, not describe them.

The Tory press is now extraordinarily hostile. The *Conrad Black* titles invite the great and good to snipe at him: Lord Jenkins, Lord Healey, Lord Dacre, Lord Rees-Mogg, Lord Harris, Sir Alan Walters, Sir David Steel. Unnamed "colleagues" are invited to attack him without having to reveal their identities (a British media practice considered unethical in America). Lord Longford hyperbolically dismisses "the most helpless government in the whole history of government... intellectually the weakest prime minister I can think of." *The Sun* heaps "discredit on a government of U-turns and few policies". All damn Mr Major with faint praise. He is nice, well-intentioned, the sort you would like to see marry your problem daughter. But there is no leadership, no conviction, no match for Curzon's demand that the man be bigger than the job, not the other way round.

How are we supposed to validate this, to relate it to the man in Downing Street? British political intelligence is heavily "mediated". Evidence is limited to the press and television, themselves relying on Westminster gossip and occasional Commons appearances. Much of this mediation is partisan.

based on the badinage of Commons corridor and television studio. The prime minister's comparative youth and inexperience make him ripe for dismissive attacks, especially from the old and the passed over. Schadenfreude is the occupational disease of politics. If the official Opposition is ineffective, as now, then gossip, backbench sniping, disloyalty and character assassination will do. The Westminster motto is not the Queen's Government Must Go On, but Loyal Opposition Must Be Supplied, from the press and Tory backbenches if not from Labour. Undermining the boss is the default mode of democracy.

American political operators were so sceptical of such mediation last November that they confirmed Bill Clinton to "direct access" radio and television shows. Direct access was even dubbed the "new journalism". Mr Major, addicted to the old journalism, still summons editors and harangues them for being unkind to him. The public is no better informed as a result.

So let us switch to old-fashioned "facts and dates" history. There is a remarkably close comparison for Mr Major's present predicament. It is Margaret Thatcher, October 1981, similarly two-and-a-half years into her term of office and similarly at the nadir of the recessionary cycle. *The Economist* magazine, generally a supporter of Mrs Thatcher, portrayed her in dire straits: "with ideology ragged and her political position in disarray. Unemployment is at a post-war high. Her old foes are becoming bolder: each night senior figures in the party are slipping away from her camp. To the mass of the Tory party inflation is no longer the dominant issue. It is more worried by bankruptcies and unemployment."

"A mid-term slump in the party's opinion poll fortunes," continued the magazine, "is a regular feature of Tory governments." But it is a new and shattering experience for Tories to be rated third behind both Labour and the

Liberals/Social Democrats... Disloyalty has become an unconscious defence mechanism for ministers bludgeoned by recession... collective responsibility seems a thing of the past... no prime minister since Attlee has had less support at Number 10. Eleven members of the cabinet were named as forming a cabal of dissidents against the prime minister on domestic policy. She was isolated from her government, vulnerable to coup. All hinged on what seemed a gigantic gamble: that the economy would pick up in time for the next election "in spite of government action rather than because of it".

Much hot air has since been expended on whether Mrs Thatcher's 1983 election victory was the result of the gamble paying off or of the Falklands War. It was probably both. What is clear is that in October 1981 she was the victim of the same

aftermath that has attended all downturns in post-war economic cycles. Here was a re-run of Edward Heath's mid-term blues, the same party anguish, the same policy U-turns. She even accused "high American interest rates" as one cause of Britain's plight, as Mr Major has blamed German ones. The Downing Street scapegoat cupboard is never bare.

Mrs Thatcher confronted the threat to her position much as Mr Major has done. Far from being the straight arrow of mythology, she contorted, twisted and U-turned. She backed away from reductions in public spending, with large rises from 1979 to 1983. She bailed out British Leyland, capitulated to the miners (that time), countermanded a de-indexation of pensions, gave more money to defence, to the Home Office, to public-sector pay. Admittedly she indulged in two ministerial sackings, in the summer and winter of that year. But she had an insurrectionary cabinet on her hands, which Mr Major does not. At the Tory party conference that year bets were being taken that she

would not see out the year. Mr Major is now compared unfavourably to Mrs Thatcher as a leader. Many of the comparisons are from those whose loathing of Mrs Thatcher knew no bounds. They abhorred her inability to conciliate, her refusal to listen, her stridency of tone, her belief in her own judgment against all corners. These manifestations of strong leadership were anathema. The qualities that secured Mr Major the succession were that he did not share them. He was a good chairman, a listener, thoughtful, not inclined to partisanship. He would "heal the wounds of Thatcherism" — in the catchphrase of the dear old days of 1990.

His mistakes have been particular rather than legion: his addition to the European Community, raprochement of the 1980s led to the wilderness of fixed exchange rates and monetary union. From that so much else has followed, from the delaying of recovery to the fiasco of Maastricht ratification. Recession has turned a harsh light on Mr Major's weaknesses. It has shown him, like Mrs Thatcher, squirming in the heat, reversing decisions on coal, defence, interest rates, public spending. It has made him and his parliamentary managers accident-prone, indecisive, vulnerable to the charge of weak leadership. Mrs Thatcher may not have been accused of weak leadership, but she was certainly accused of bad leadership. Which is worse?

The evidence of history is that recessions always test governments harshly. Mr Major is secure compared with those now struggling to rule France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Japan, even America. He has no revolt on his hands. His parliamentary weakness is his own doing but not terminal. He is about to appoint his reincarnation of Maugham, Barber and Lawson: an "expansion" Chancellor to preside over the next boom. There is no reason why an upturn beginning at the end of this year should not see a Tory recovery in the polls and Mr Major regarded as having pulled off an electoral coup. That is the guidance of history, a more reliable guide than Westminster wish fulfilment.

Recessions are devastating national evils. All the artifice of democracy has proved impotent before them. It is right that they should also hurt those in power, that voters should occasionally turn on their leaders and plunge them back in the icy bath.

Time to tax the better off

Nicholas Ridley on the need for a 50 per cent tax rate

John Major has called for us all to show more confidence. He insists that all the right policies are in place. Once again he sees green shoots appearing everywhere. The *Elder Pitt* once said: "Pardon me, Gentlemen, confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom. Youth is the season of credulity." Even the youth of Britain seem a bit short of credulity, and certainly most "aged bosoms" do not see the plant of confidence bursting forth into green shoots. The people no longer believe the government. They do not believe its forecasts. There is deep gloom about future economic prospects.

The right reaction by the government is not to throw more money at the problem, but to continue the long haul back to sensible policies. The Budget on March 16 is an opportunity to accelerate the slow growth of the plant, confidence. But with a second Budget due in December, the temptation not to do today that which can be put off until tomorrow is strong and must be resisted.

There are two problems. How to bring about a healthy, non-inflationary recovery; and what to do about the overmighty borrowing requirement. Solving the first would help to solve the second, because to do so would cut spending and increase revenue: it must therefore take priority.

The medicine that the economy needs to revive activity can only be further cuts in interest rates. It would be best to make a 2 per cent cut now, rather than do it in dribs and drabs as in the past. And the Chancellor should forget about the exchange rate: it is the government's past pointless obsession with the myth that exchange rates matter which is largely responsible for the mess that we are in.

The other myth which is current and very dangerous is that there are two ways of financing the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR). One is to increase taxes and cut spending, which is painful and might choke off recovery. The other is to see financing the PSBR as painless, and the equivalent of taking money that grows on trees. In fact the two are not so very different. Borrowing from the non-bank public reduces the capital available in the private sector, with the unfortunate effect of jeopardising private investment, while not harming the standard of living. But it still takes money out of the economy, except in so far as it comes from overseas.

What has happened, for years now, is that fiscal policy has been too lax and monetary policy too tight. The government's desire to be loved has made it funk tax increases, despite the fact that over the last two years our gross domestic product has fallen by nearly 4 per cent and spending has gone up by 8 per cent. It is not wise to plug a widening gap between income and expenditure by borrowing.

Some of the PSBR can be financed by underfunding — that is borrowing from the banks. I advocated this in an article on this page on January 21, and since then it seems to have been generally accepted, even by the Chancellor. That will help to finance the PSBR this year, but it is addictive like heroin and must not be pursued too long or too much. It cannot solve the long-term problems of the excessive PSBR.

I believe that tax increases are therefore necessary both for sound economic reasons, and also for the government to give, for the first time, a strong signal that it is prepared to do unpopular things if the national interest demands them. So far it has only given one firm signal: that it wants to ratify the Maastricht Treaty. This is a major cause of the present lack of confidence, because it directly conflicts with making Britain's recovery the top priority.

I hope the Chancellor will have some spending cuts for us on March 16, but this is a Budget, not a statement of government spending plans. We look to substantial cuts in December. So a start has to be made on tax increases.

It is tempting only to go for increases in the coverage and rate of VAT, for higher excise duties and petrol taxes and any other indirect taxes lying around that can be squeezed up a bit. I believe he should do a lot of that, but to do so alone has the result of widening the gap between rich and poor. Only income tax narrowens that gap, and if there is to be belt-tightening, the better off must also make their contribution. I believe there should be a higher rate of income tax on the slice of income over £50,000 or £60,000 — perhaps at 50p in the pound. Another way of doing this is to abolish the ceiling on National Insurance contributions. The defect of this is that it lets off the retired and those who do not work soot free, however rich they may be. Any further revenue would have to come from non-indexation of the allowances, or increasing the standard rate of income tax. This may well be necessary, but I hope it can wait until December.

Budgets should be great occasions (I remember some MPs in top hats, others in miners' overalls, determined to keep alive the class war). If the Chancellor can get it across that recovery is to be the top priority, that close behind it is the need to get the PSBR under control, and that the PSBR is dead as a doer, he will contribute to rebuilding confidence. It is not too late for Mr Major to restore a "season of credulity". March 16 is the time to do it.

Lord Ridley was Conservative MP for Cirencester and Tewkesbury 1959-92.

Welsh in the margins

WITH his slender majority of 20 already under threat in the Newbury by-election, John Major can ill-afford to alienate Tory MPs in marginal seats. So what on earth induced David Hunt, the Welsh secretary, to keep Powsys as part of his otherwise welcome plan to rid the principality of the "counties" that have blighted it since 1974. Chwyd, Dyfed, Gwynedd are all to go, but not Powys, a ghastly amalgam of Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire and Breconshire.

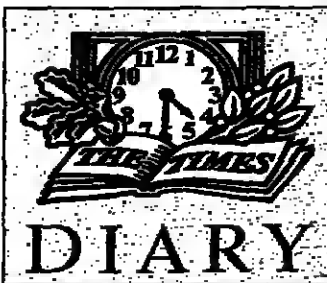
Hunt's unexpected decision has infuriated loyal residents and caused particular consternation in the office of Jonathan Evans, who became Conservative MP for Brecon and Radnor only after five recounts, and with a majority of just 130.

Lord Hooson, the Liberal Democrat MP for Montgomery from 1962 to 1979, is in no doubt about the implications of Hunt's decision. "Jonathan Evans may as well pack his suitcase now and return to Wales. We have already won the seat back. We will fight this decision at every level. It has caused grave offence."

With Hooson preparing to fight

the changes in the Lords, the present Lib Dem MP for Montgomery, Alex Carlisle, is preparing to lead the charge in the Commons. "This is the death warrant of the Tories in the area. We can and will work with Jonathan Evans to try to stop this plan." With Evans? Oh yes. For Evans the Pragmatist, as he will surely become known, has pledged to fight the changes. "The plan is unacceptable. I will oppose it. But the Liberals should not get too excited. The MP most closely associated with the return of the traditional counties is me." Alas for Evans, the party most closely associated with their demise is his.

● A nasty case of déjà vu for Lord Lawson, the former chancellor, and Sir Peter Middleton, the former permanent secretary at the Royal Opera House on Monday night, they settled down for a pleasant evening. But wasn't there something worryingly familiar about the woman dominating the stage? That strident tone, those bursts of temper, the beheading of those who failed her... Could it be? Was it? Of course not, it was



Dame Gwyneth Jones giving her all as Turandot. Still, a nasty moment.

Question Time

JOHN BIRT, the BBC's newest member of staff, is not yet out of the mire. Next week the British Film Institute and BAFTA hosts a "commission of enquiry" into the future of the BBC. The first event, on Tuesday evening, sees Birt interviewed by Jeremy Isaacs in front of an audience of more than four hundred.

The BFI says the interview "was originally meant to be quite cosy, with clips from his favourite films and discussion of his career. Now I would be very surprised if the matter of his pay was not addressed." Indeed it will be. Tony Lenanton, president of BECTU, the broad-

casting union, has a list of questions for Birt. He says: "I want him to answer this question, for a start — how was it legal to be paid like this for five years? Who authorised it, and why was it kept secret? There are questions about the future of the BBC I want to ask. But I should think there will also be a lot of other people who want to ask him for tax advice."

Hammering away

EITHER very brave or very foolish, Simon Dickinson, until last week senior picture director at Christie's, has decided this is the moment to set up a new venture in the world of fine art.

Turning his back on 24 years at

We're mainly interested in reproductions of the Queen



Christie's, Dickinson has joined up with his old friend David Ker, a dealer in English pictures and drawings since 1980. The new company, Simon Dickinson Ltd, will deal in what Dickinson knows best — Old Masters. "Simon has the greatest eye of our generation," enthuses Ker. Dickinson is credited with many discoveries and rediscoveries in the art world, the most notable of which is *Venus & Adonis* by Titian, which sold for £7.5 million after he spent 10 years establishing its authenticity. So, brave or foolish? Neither, says Dickinson: "Now is absolutely the right time to start. We will be able to buy very well, and there is a lot of new money around." Now that is a discovery.

Street of memories

ROMANTIC couples who married in the journalists' church in Fleet St. St Bride's will return to repeat their vows to each other on March 14. The service, originally planned for Sunday morning on St Valentine's day, was rescheduled after Canon John Oates decided a special service on a Sunday afternoon would suit the most journalists.

Among the 70 couples who have so far confirmed they will attend are four couples from *The Times*.

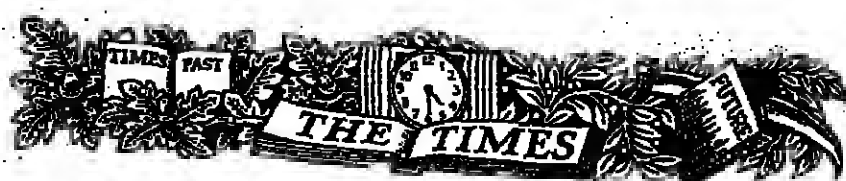
and Charlie Burgess, managing editor of *The Independent* and his wife Anne Spackman, who runs *The Independent's* weekend section. Burgess reminisces: "We were the first couple to marry at *The Independent*. When we met, I was sports editor and she was a news hackette — we went down the aisle to the *Match of the Day* theme tune." But the occasion is not just for journalists. Debbie Thatcher, a former Fleet Street traffic warden and her husband Jim, who married her husband at St Bride's, are also expected.

Canon Oates recognises that seasoned Fleet Street party-goers would be disappointed to go straight home after the service: "There will not exactly be a reception afterwards, but there will be a celebratory gathering at St Bride's Institute."

● A new photograph by the Earl of Snowdon is to grace the cover of the book *Terry Waite is writing about his time in captivity*. It shows Waite against a pale background, with hands clenched and wearing an open-necked shirt. Mark Lucas, Waite's agent, says Snowdon has caught the "suffering" Waite has experienced. "It is an honest shot. Terry is not a man who needs to reach for the airbrush."

Time to
tax the
better off
Nicholas Ridley on
the need for a
50 per cent tax rate

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 3 1993



TOWARDS THE NEW EUROPE

The next European treaty must be a charter of liberty

With the rattle of parliamentary gunfire over Maastricht echoing in their ears, the last thing British politicians want to do is think about further revisions to the constitution of Europe. Yet, whether or not the Maastricht treaty is finally ratified, arguments about Europe's constitutional future will resume on the day the Maastricht debate ends.

If it is ratified, the treaty's messy ambiguity will provoke immediate conflict over notoriously vague clauses dealing with "subsidiarity" and the powers of European institutions. The new European union the treaty will create will almost immediately expand — to include Austria, Sweden, Finland and perhaps Norway by 1996 and much of central Europe by the end of the decade. European leaders have already agreed that another constitutional conference, like the one that led up to Maastricht, will begin in 1996. If Maastricht collapses, such a conference would effectively begin the next day.

Douglas Hurd's speech last month on the future of Europe showed that the British government has begun to think about this next stage, and not before time. Britain's attitude to Europe has traditionally been to wait for other countries to set the agenda and then to fight rearguard actions against any unacceptable ideas. This technique was ineffectual during the moulding of the Single European Act and helped turn Maastricht into a muddle. Britain must start immediately to promote its vision of Europe.

Europe is a shifting battleground in which the distribution of power can move at any time. Maastricht will make new shifts all the easier. Much of the treaty presumes a monolithic quasi-state of the future, not only in the blueprint for monetary union. It says, for example, that the European Commission will be "fully associated" with common foreign policy. John Major told the last Tory party conference that foreign policy would have nothing to do with the Commission — a fiction which M. Delors, who is already building up his "foreign office", will briskly seek to dispel.

The assumption, however, that all European countries will move along the same road and at the same speed towards some kind of European statehood is being refuted day by day. Indeed the principle that different European countries will move at different speeds, and even in different directions, is already embodied in several post-Maastricht arrangements: the exemptions for Britain and Denmark from monetary union; the multi-speed move to a single currency implied by the economic convergence criteria; the separate Schengen treaty on border controls among nine states; and the social chapter agreed by 11 countries. If existing members can pick and choose, waiting applicants should also have the right to opt in or out of particular areas of co-operation.

Greater intellectual openness will give Britain the influence it will need to persuade its partners to return powers to national governments which should never have been ceded to Brussels. But in arguing for greater flexibility in the future development of Europe, Britain will have to fight just as hard to preserve the core freedoms embodied in the Single European Act and unconditionally accepted by all the Twelve.

To set the agenda and weave the necessary alliances, Britain will also have to be prepared to deepen co-operation where there is a palpable need. The Community's northern states, including Britain, are feeling their way to a more activist policy to combat cross-border pollution. Could Britain, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands form their own subdivision for tougher rules on ecology?

The next European treaty could and should be a balanced and liberating charter, but only if its makers free themselves from the crabbed and superannuated set of mind which produced Maastricht. The federal form of integration and that each treaty ratchets states towards that goal has been subverted by events. The front lines in the battle of ideas are forming now.

PANIC OVER CRIME

The government's new policy has been hastily conceived

A part of a home secretary's job is to respond to public disquiet, with an appearance of decisiveness. It is a part which few incumbents enjoy but all know they must play. Their performances are usually easy both to explain and to mock: Kenneth Clarke's effort yesterday was no exception.

One horrific child murder does not make a crime-wave. It would only have been a justification for taking government initiatives if those initiatives, carefully thought through, were waiting ready in the Home Office for their moment of ripe time. Yesterday's statement on juvenile crime did not meet that test. It had all the hallmarks of a policy both conceived and announced in panic.

Mr Clarke's new secure schools are designed for young, male, persistent offenders aged 12 to 15. He skirted the question of when they will be ready and admitted he did not yet know how much they will cost. He does not yet seem to have won Treasury approval. He does not even know how many such children there are. Even allowing for the fall in the population's total number of children, juvenile crime seems to be on the decrease. According to Home Office research, the number of known male offenders aged 10 to 17 has fallen by 32 per cent since 1985. Among 10 to 13-year-olds, the fall is 43 per cent.

How effective would be Mr Clarke's proposed solution? If rehabilitation is the aim, evidence suggests that locking young people up is the least useful form of punishment: offenders are much more likely to reoffend once released than if they have suffered any other type of punishment. Any suggestion that these new schools might in this sense "solve" juvenile crime is misguided.

Secure institutions can, however, remove

from the streets a few youngsters for whom punishment in the community has not worked, and who would otherwise be burgling and joyriding their way around town. This is a fine aim. But it is unlikely to make a proper dent on overall crime levels while so few criminals are caught.

Britain is in the grip of one of those moral panics that afflict every nation periodically, usually during recessions. The preferred scapegoats may be drinkers, as in 1920s America, or thuggish teenagers, as in 1950s and 1960s Britain. A scapegoat, though, is not necessarily an innocent. Such youngsters have until now got off lightly. If they are not prepared to respond to humane community punishments, they must accept society's retribution. But Mr Clarke should at least try to ensure that they are not turned into professional criminals by the experience.

Locking young offenders up together in one school increases peer group pressure and hardens already tough teenagers. Increasing the number of secure units within existing local authority homes instead would allow youngsters to mix with non-criminals of their own age, making it easier for them to join the law-abiding classes when they leave.

The best thing Mr Clarke can now do is to cast about for ideas from the public, voluntary and private sectors on the type of regime the schools should offer. Diversity should be the aim, so that courts can choose the most appropriate regime for each offender. He should not be surprised if his measures, though popular, fail to solve the "problem" of juvenile crime. But little long-term harm is likely to be done unless the reasons for this week's rhetoric become permanently confused with reasons for action.

WATTS IN A NAME

Standardised pronunciation should be left to machines

Names are the oldest magic of language. The passing on and pronunciation of names within a family is the bonding by which ancestors are kept alive in their descendants. Infant baptism, women changing their names on marriage, nicknames, esoteric local pronunciations, monks and nuns taking on new names when they enter religious orders: these are rites of passage in this onomastic magic.

It would be rather of the European Commission to meddle with this ancient irrationality of names than with even such equally slippery substances as butter or olive oil. But yesterday the EC helped to launch a megalomaniac £2 million project to standardise and mechanise the pronunciations of all the names of Europe. Each of the nine working languages of the EC will derive correct pronunciations for a million names of all sorts — proper, personal, topographical and proprietary.

Even within a single country there can be disagreement over the proper pronunciation of names. From Milngavie to Cirencester. Set aside Featherstonehaugh as not worth the spit. When it comes to enunciating foreign names, chaos rules because of their native onomastic magic. It may be desirable to speak names all the same in EuroPron. But this desirability does not help Greeks to

pronounce (or spell) as common an English name as Brown, the French with English diphthongs, or the English not to feel self-conscious with the Castilian lisp. Ustinov trips off the tongue of eastern Europeans who cannot get their tonsils around John Smith. Nobody outside the Nordic countries would even have a shot at the Danish telecommunications company concerned in the project, spelled Jysk. And what can be done about Deutschland, Allemagne, Germany?

Names are not just magic, they are dangerous. The earliest bitter heresy in the Christian church was fought and cost many lives and careers over the difference of an iota. No fewer than 42,000 Ephraimites were butchered at the passages of Jordan for a trivial mispronunciation of Shibboleth.

So far, this project is designed only for computers, not for babbling mortals. It is intended to teach unimaginative machines to read names from text into speech without their having been recorded by human voice. Electronic standardisation may have its uses for the mass market. Any other standardisation of the diversity of man's pronunciation of names has been out of bounds since the Tower of Babel, on the instructions of a higher authority even than the EC.

Mood of panic on juvenile crime

From the Director General of Save the Children and others

Sir, The general climate of hostility towards young people which has developed in recent weeks, together with the reaction to the exceptional and tragic case in Bootle, is an unhelpful background against which to introduce new measures to deal with juvenile crime. Both the major political parties have been precipitated into policy statements, with the government bringing forward proposals which were originally scheduled for later in the year.

In the atmosphere of "moral panic", there is a danger that all the lessons learned in recent years about the clear link between juvenile custody and high re-offending rates will be lost. Schemes to prevent young people being drawn into the criminal justice system, and to confront those who have offended with the consequences of their offending, have proved far more successful than custody in preventing re-offending.

It seems extraordinary that new approaches to young offenders, brought in by the Children Act, which was implemented in 1991, and the Criminal Justice Act, implemented in October last year, are already under attack before they can be properly tried and tested.

As organisations working with and on behalf of children and young people, our concern is that any measures to deal with juvenile offenders should be effective not merely punitive. If indeed there is not enough secure accommodation for the tiny minority of young people who have committed serious offences, this could be addressed by a very small increase in existing provision.

It does not make sense to rush to establish expensive and untested new institutions, when the potential of existing systems has not yet been tapped. Voluntary organisations in partnership with the probation service departments and the police have developed considerable expertise in providing schemes for young offenders and children with behavioural problems which challenge and contain anti-social behaviour.

At the very time that many of these imaginative programmes are being cut, it is ironic that the government should be proposing expensive new measures.

Above all, however, the current situation requires much more thought about preventing young children offending in the first place. The urgent priority should be to restore hope and create opportunities in the communities in which our young people are growing up.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS HINTON,
Director General, Save the Children.
WENDY AYOTTE
(Children's Legal Centre),
MICHAEL JARMAN (Barnardo's),
P. NOYES (NSPCC),
JOHN REA PRICE
(National Children's Bureau),
IAN SPARKS (The Children's Society),
TOM WHITE
(National Children's Homes),
Mary Datchelor House,
17 Grove Lane, SE5,
March 2.

From Mr Peter Evans

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("Brainwashed by hysteria", February 24) cites experience suggesting that "the more costly the punishment of a given type of offender, the higher the likelihood of reoffending". This is partly because young criminals given tougher punishments as a sign of society's disapproval are the hard core likely to reoffend anyway. It is not so much that such punishments fail but that coming at the end of years of failure to prevent and reform they have little hope of success.

Mr Jenkins also says that criminality is still abnormal in Britain and that "robust, confident communities learn to understand and encompass such abnormality, not greet it with howls of impotence". That may indeed be true for the nation as a whole, but it should be remembered that the destruction of urban communities and the rehousing of people in bleak estates, with a dangerous effect on children, were a cause of concern at the time.

More than 20 years ago Hugh Klarm, who was head of the division at the Council of Europe dealing with crime problems, warned of the lack of outlets in anonymous cities for strong and even violent emotions. "The scene is set and the danger signals are flying," he wrote in *Europe Tomorrow*.

People want rituals and role-models so as to express their aspirations and emotions, and if society does not provide them, they will seek less acceptable substitutes.

Yours faithfully,
PETER EVANS,
6 Foxcroft, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

From Mrs Susan Long

Sir, I agree with Miss McLean (letter, February 26) that we should have sympathy for the families of the two children accused of James Bulger's murder. However, their anguish can indeed be less than that of the Bulger family: their sons are still alive.

Yours faithfully,
S. LONG,
3 Meadow Drive,
Hampton-in-Arden, West Midlands,
February 26.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Protests over limitations on legal aid

From Mrs Barbara Roche, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green (Labour)

Sir, As your report, "Mackay to speed legal-aid reform" (February 25, later editions), makes clear, the Lord Chancellor dismissed claims that 14 million people will be hit by his proposals for legal aid. He told the home affairs select committee that there had never been 14 million claims for legal aid in a year.

However, as I pointed out to him, that is clearly not the issue. The 14 million figure tallies broadly with the government's own estimate that 37 per cent of households will be affected. Many people eligible for full or partial legal aid will be denied access to legal representation.

The legal aid scheme was designed to ensure equal access to the law for all, not just the very rich or the very poor. Under these proposals people of moderate means are discriminated against. Many are women who are low earners but who would earn just above the threshold.

The strength of feeling against the proposals from a wide range of people and organisations is impressive. The government's own legal-aid efficiency scrutiny in 1986 concluded that there was no scope to reduce the fee limit for legal aid, which is no higher in real terms now than it was then. Over 40 professional and voluntary organisations took part in the recent lobby of Parliament against the Lord Chancellor's proposals. The Lord Chief Justice described the proposals as "deplorable" (reports, February 4).

The Lord Chancellor has set his face against the various alternative proposals and is apparently determined to press on with these reforms. I urge him to reconsider.

Yours sincerely,
BARBARA ROCHE,
House of Commons,
February 25.

From Lord Donaldson of Lynton

Sir, Mr John Taylor, MP (letter, February 20), characterises as nonsense the assertion (letter, February 17) that "vast numbers of people" will be denied the right to pursue personal injury claims as a result of changes in the legal-aid regulations. "Vast" is an inexact and elastic term, so let us substitute "a significant number of people". This is in addition to those who previously found themselves in the legal-aid poverty trap.

Supporting Tomlinson?

From Professor N. A. Wright

Sir, Mr Paddy Ross, chairman of the Joint Consultants Committee (JCC), states in his letter of February 22 that the "broad thrust" of the government's response to the Tomlinson report is "supported by the medical profession at national level".

The Royal College of Physicians represents consultant physicians at national level and the Royal Colleges are represented on the JCC. Can Mr Ross confirm that his letter was written after consultation with them? The views he expresses differ in several important respects from their own position.

In a press release dated February 16 the Royal College of Physicians welcomed some of the Secretary of State's proposals but was very concerned about others. In particular, the adequacy of the funding needed to bolster the GP/community services, the speed with which the speciality reviews have to report (May 31 this year) and the failure of the Secretary of State to make firm recommendations

about the four threatened major teaching hospitals were sources of anxiety.

The Royal College called on the Secretary of State to develop plans as to (i) where patients will be cared for; (ii) where the education and training of doctors will occur; and (iii) how research will be fostered. The statement concluded that "unless such plans are produced, each of these will suffer in a damaging, steady unplanned erosion". Is such a statement consistent with support at "national level", vouchsafed by Mr Ross?

A further source of great concern must be the future of special health authorities, which play a vital national and indeed international role: these institutions will become truis under the current proposals and their future viability in the market must be an item of considerable disquiet. Does Mr Ross perceive "national-level support" for this, too?

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS A. WRIGHT,
Department of Histopathology,
Hammersmith Hospital,
Du Cane Road, W12.

From Mr Stephen Bradshaw

Sir, The Lord Chancellor's recent proposals to restrict eligibility for legal aid are yet another example of discrimination against disabled people. Under the proposals full legal aid will be restricted to those with incomes at the income-support level. Disability benefits will be treated as income.

Disabled people in receipt of income support and disability benefits will have to contribute one third of their disability benefits towards the cost of their legal work. For most people this will mean that justice is a luxury that they cannot afford.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN BRADSHAW
(Executive Director),
Spinal Injuries Association,
Newpoint House,
76 St James's Lane, N10.

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Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS A. WRIGHT,
Department of Histopathology,
Hammersmith Hospital,
Du Cane Road, W12.

Community health

From Mrs V. M. Middleton

Sir, Tony Travers ("Lost in the NHS maze", February 17) made valid criticisms of the National Health Service management structure. The members of the new health authorities, regional and district, no longer necessarily live in the area, use the NHS and are accountable to the public. Instead they are employees of the health service or businessmen who may well live far from the office and pay for private health care.

It was, of course, as your correction (February 25) made clear, wrong for Mr Travers to say that chairmen of community health councils are appointed from Whitehall. Moreover, half the CHC members are local authority proposals and a third are

elected by local voluntary organisations affiliated to the CHC. Only 17 per cent are appointed by the regional health authority. The chairman is elected by the members from their number.

As the members are unpaid, receiving from the RHA only travelling expenses and funds for a small secretarial and research office, they feel free to bite the hands that feed them an occasional sandwich lunch.

They bite as hard as they can, with the help of the local press, the local authority and some local MPs, but health authorities are thick-skinned and will only occasionally compromise.

Yours faithfully,
V. M. MIDDLETON,
10 Shenley Lane,
Weoley Castle, Birmingham 29.

Libel victory

From Mr Robin Thompson

Sir, Anthony Lewis ("Lawyers, libel and liberty", February 24) is right to welcome as a "landmark for free speech" the judgment in the Derbyshire County Council case (in which the Law Lords decided that county councils had no right to sue for libel because they did not have a reputation to protect). But journalists and politicians should not be drawn into believing that this makes the slightest difference to the opportunity for an individual to sue for defamation successfully.

In its report of the case (February 28) *The Sunday Times* recorded that one of the parties, a businessman, had already received £1 million in costs and damages, and the libel action brought by the then council leader has yet to be settled.

The Lords judgment included reference to the First Amendment to the American constitution, and the recog-

nition that freedom of speech was a part of the common law of the land. When the case was judged in the Court of Appeal, references were made to the European Convention on Human Rights.

There is cause for celebration. But journalists know the greatest danger of attacking an institution of any kind is the right of the person in charge to claim personal injury in a libel action. Nothing has happened to change that and good journalists will continue with it, which is based on balanced reporting, ensuring the right of reply, creating fair and comprehensive presentation of facts and headlines, and making sure, as far as possible, that what they say is based on facts known at the time.

Sincerely yours,
ROBIN THOMPSON
(Editor, Training),
Westminster Press,
Hanover House, Marine Court,
St Leonards, East Sussex,
February 24.

Coal privatisation threat to research

From Professor Jim Harrison and Professor Alan Williams

Sir, As joint chairmen of the Coal Research Forum, we believe that there is a need for a long-term coherent policy for basic research on coal, co-ordinated with a plan to promote the improvement of coal technology and with the development stages of new clean coal technology to larger-scale demonstration plant.

It is our fear that the privatisation of the coal industry will result in the termination of strategic research and development on coal, as has happened with electricity research. We believe that there is a strong need for the government to pull together the benefits of this research for the nation. We are concerned that long-term research will simply not happen without government input.

We believe that the government can provide the mechanism and leadership to develop such collaborative projects, as those already identified by the Department of Energy's task force, as do governments in other countries, notably the United States, Japan and Germany.

We are particularly concerned about the future of the Coal Research Establishment at Cheltenham. This forms the central organisation for coal research in the UK and is a focus of the UK coal research effort at universities. It is dedicated to coal utilisation research and was built up as a national institute through the nationalised industry.

CRE represents a national resource and asset which needs to continue, but for which a new method of funding needs to be established. Without such a base, it would be difficult, for example, to develop UK expertise in the clean coal technology for use in the future UK industry. Government support would be needed to help to establish CRE on a new basis to serve national and industrial needs and to establish wider markets for its expertise.

The UK needs to continue to be actively involved in coal research and not be reduced to a passive role. A programme is needed to support basic research into the clean use of coal, to build on the expertise already created by UK research by promoting the demonstration of clean coal technologies based on gasification and combustion, and to establish a new basis for the continued operation of the CRE as the national centre for coal science.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES HARRISON,
ALAN WILLIAMS
(Joint Chairmen),
Coal Research Forum,
Stoke Orchard, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire,
March 1.

Tax and workfare

From Mr Stephen Green

Sir, Too many people believe that the unemployed are drawing on the contributions they have made over the years.

No one builds up a fund or entitlement by his contributions to "national insurance" or general taxation. The system is one of "pay-as-you-go", and as government has no money but ours, today's workers fund today's pensioners and social security claimants.

The system works, just, with six or seven taxpayers to each pensioner or claimant. With fewer than three or four it is increasingly reliant on borrowing, to be repaid by our children. The growth in the number of claimants seems to have an underlying upward trend, and the pensioner population relative to our workforce is rising from better health care and a birth rate that fails to match our mortality rate.

It is surely far better to attempt to tackle these realities now, mixing child tax allowances with workfare, redundancy insurance and gradual replacement of the state retirement provision by honest individual fund-building pensions, than to struggle on building up public debt until the whole house of cards collapses.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN GREEN
(Chairman, Conservative Family Campaign),
26 Farm Avenue, SW16,
March 1.

Out of Africa

From Mrs Dorothy Middleton

Sir, Your account (February 22) of the discovery of material relating to the Emin Pasha relief expedition of 1887-9, led by H. M. Stanley, suggests that the EPRE is now revealed for the first time, and that it was for the relief of "a beleaguered chief".

Emin Pasha was in fact a German doctor, appointed governor of Equatoria in the southern Sudan in 1877, and cut off there by the Mahdists rising in which Gordon was killed in Khartoum. Far from being revealed in Captain R. H. Nelson's records, as your account suggests, the EPRE is probably the most fully documented of Stanley's adventures.

Yours faithfully,
DOROTHY MIDDLETON,
74 Royal Hospital Road, SW3.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

150

شخص الاصل

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

NEWS

Detention centres to curb juveniles

A network of detention centres similar to old approved schools will be the centrepiece of a government attack on juvenile crime. Kenneth Clarke has announced.

Secure training centres will accommodate a hard core of juveniles between 12 and 15 who repeatedly defy the law. The measures brought immediate criticism from MPs on all sides, penal groups and some charities. Pages 1, 8, 15

Britons involved in Texas sect siege

Up to 14 Britons are thought to be connected with the religious sect in Waco which is under siege by hundreds of federal agents preparing to storm their heavily armed compound near the Texas town. The sect leader, David Koresh, apparently agreed to surrender if a tape recording he sent out was broadcast locally. Pages 1, 3

RAF job losses

Two in every three RAF officers above the rank of squadron leader are threatened with redundancy in the next phase of defence manpower cuts. Page 1

Medicine charges up

Prescription charges go up 50p on April 1 to £4.25—an increase almost eight times the rate of inflation. Dental charges will also rise forcing patients to pay 80 per cent of costs instead of 75 per cent. Page 2

IRA raid

Scotland Yard anti-terrorist branch detectives were examining a north London house last night for possible IRA bomb-making equipment after arresting two men in a special operation. Pages 1, 6

Brothers killed

Two Russian brothers from the mountainous region of Chechnya were found dead, each with three shots in the head, in their £1 million London penthouse flat. Two men are being questioned. Page 2

Force approved

Boutros Boutros Ghali, the United Nations secretary-general, will tell the government that he is ready to see UN troops given the authority to use force to implement a peace deal in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Page 9

Protection demand

Norman Brennan, 31, a British Transport detective who has

been commended for bravery six times and has suffered 16 assaults, has launched a campaign for better protection for police officers. Page 2

Judge's call

Sir Thomas Bingham, who as Master of the Rolls is England's most senior civil judge, has urged the government to give judges greater power to protect citizens' rights by enshrining the European human rights convention in law. Page 6

Clinton a-courting

President Clinton met Republicans in Congress to persuade them of the value of his economic reform proposals. Page 10

Flirtatious Yeltsin

President Yeltsin, in his most unconventional attempt so far to win support for his struggling presidency, has said he is prepared to work with moderate communists. Page 10

Travel tips

Britain has warned that security of tourists in Egypt cannot be guaranteed, while the US alerted Americans to a heightened threat of terrorism in Jordan. Page 10

Appeals won

The Court of Appeal has cleared Dennis Tulloch, Everard Brown, Ida Odeinde, and Rennie Kingsley of drug convictions which they claimed had been achieved with corrupt police evidence. Page 5

A time to know a time to die

Doctors and nurses are being given advice by their respective professional bodies on how to allow patients to die with dignity after it was discovered that disagreements between them had led to hospital patients, close to death, being subjected to painful and degrading treatment to keep them alive. Page 5



Ambridge on the move: The Archers gathered at Wimbledon theatre yesterday to launch a national tour of their stage production, *Murder at Ambridge Hall*. Left to right, back are Terry Mallow (Mike Tucker), Richard Derrington (Mark Hebbden) and Trevor Harrison (Eddie Grundy). Front: Felicity Pinch (Ruth Archer), Ros Adams (Clarrie Grundy), Carole Boyd (Lynda Snell) and Catherine Yates (Greta Wiesbaden), a character created specially for the stage and not featured on radio.

BUSINESS

BCCI bill: Touche Ross, administrators to the collapsed BCCI International bank, say fees and expenses have already exceeded £153 million. Pages 1, 21

Revving up: Motor manufacturers say new car sales in Britain rose about 12 per cent in February but demand in other European markets is faltering. Page 21

Markets: Sterling made further gains against leading currencies, rising 95 cents to \$1.4505 and 34 pence to DM2.3781 as hopes faded of a prompt cut in UK interest rates. Shares eased in dull trading. The FT-SE 100 index closed down 0.3 at 2,892.3. Page 24

SPORTS

Football: Eric Cantona, Manchester United's French international striker, has been charged by the Football Association with misconduct for allegedly spitting at supporters of his former club, Leeds United. Page 38

Rugby: Allegations that three Harlequins forwards switched footwear illegally before the Pilkington Cup match against Watford were investigated by the Middlesex county union. Page 40

Football: Having dropped a point at home to Olympique de Marseille in Group 1 of the European Cup, Rangers now need to win both matches against Bruges, away today and on March 17, to give themselves the possibility of facing Milan in the final. Page 40

MODERN TIMES

Banana split: The banana is not something to be toyed with in domestic politics or international trade. It has split the EC into two warring camps just as it attempts to force a single market and end the national import regimes that have grown up since the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957. Page 12

LOOKS

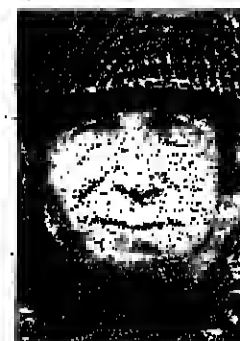
Shapely view: "Men, ever concerned that women should have no unfair advantages in the war of the sexes, have been slowly inching their way towards Lycra. The male bottom came into public view at the end of the 1980s," Alice Thomson on leggings for men. Page 13



Fiona Smith, England's second-ranked badminton player, underlines how sportswomen cope with the burdens of motherhood. Page 38



Eddie George, deputy governor of the Bank of England, said sterling was unlikely to rejoin the exchange rate mechanism within a year. Page 23



Geoff Holmes, 73, a former Parachute Regiment corporal, will lead a veterans' drop to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Arnhem landing. Page 5



Keith Fletcher, the England cricket team manager, has instructed his players to walk off the field in the event of further Indian crowd violence. Page 40

PEOPLE IN THE TIMES

TV LISTINGS

A report from Canada reveals how the survival of the black bear is under threat. *Nature* (BBC2, 7.30pm). Page 39

OPINION

Towards the new Europe

Whether or not the treaty is finally ratified, arguments about Europe's constitutional future will resume on the day the Maastricht debate ends. Page 15

Panic over crime

One horrific child murder does not make a crime wave. It would only have been a justification for taking government initiatives if those initiatives were waiting ready in the Home Office for their moment of ripe time. Yesterday's statement on juvenile crime did not meet that test. Page 15

Watts in a name

It may be desirable to speak names all the same in EuroPro. But this does not help Greeks to pronounce (or spell) as common an English name as Brown, or the English not to feel self-conscious with the Castilian *lisp*. Page 15

COLUMNS

SIMON JENKINS

In a famously nasty torture, the victim is submerged in freezing water until near drowning, then dragged out and asked to confess to various crimes. If he refuses, he is plunged back in the bath. This continues until he loses all sense of right and wrong and confesses to anything. John Major must feel like that. Page 14

NICHOLAS RIDLEY

The Elder Pitt once said: "Pardon me, Gentlemen, confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom. Youth is the season of credulity." Even the youth of Britain seem a bit short of credulity, and certainly most "aged bosoms" do not see the plant of confidence bursting forth into green shoots. Page 14

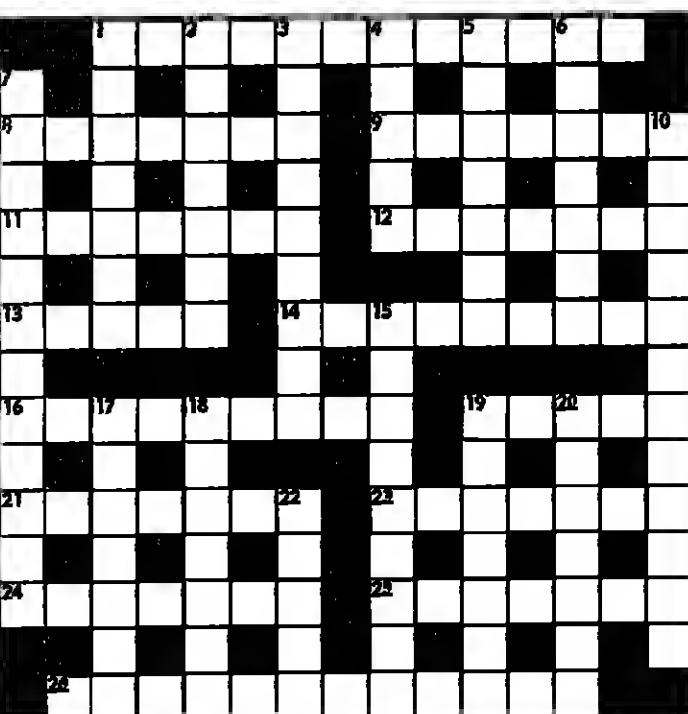
LETTERS

Juvenile crime: Moral panic is not the right atmosphere in which to propose expensive new measures for dealing with child offenders, say the directors of seven children's charities. Page 15

THE PAPERS

Terrorism is one more form of a familiar condition of violence. President Clinton was right to advise the country not to overreact. The police and intelligence are at work. Citizens can co-operate in supporting reasonable precautions. *The Washington Post*

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,168



- ACROSS**
- Complete food, it's said, for a horse (12).
 - Showing stupidity in gaeatrasching a function (7).
 - In the Dordogne you take in fresh air that's different (7).
 - Round the square goes a very large, fat runner (7).
 - Tree ring nearly immersed in salt water (7).
 - Seductive woman gives warning of danger (5).
 - Extremely pretty teacher may become a model (9).
 - Salvor's trick to get ahead of the German fugitive (9).
 - Wisdom shown by small branch hospital (5).
 - Weakened seal was adequate to secure it (7).
 - Palor of woman aboard western ship (7).
- DOWN**
- Dishonest person at a 1960s dance? (7).
 - What one thinks of a vegetable stuffed with no end of pastry (7).
 - In charge of animals, say, and taken in by eavesdroppers (9).
 - Fetters worn by prisoners in dingy vessels (5).
 - Highly ornate sailing-ship rounding Oriental capital (7).
 - Financial management of firm involved in money-changing (7).
 - Plant manufacturing Isaacson's Climbing Aid? (6, 8).
 - Around midnight, set a wild ramour aside (5, 7).
 - Revolutionary device attached to a trap (9).
 - Fine points about priest's set-up in central Europe (7).
 - Unfashionable hairstyle for a rock show, on the surface (7).
 - Formerly part of England, perhaps, and most of Wales (7).
 - Pawn the accounts book? He may do (7).
 - Rising priest leaves to find entertainment for the young (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 19,167

ALGEBRA NEMESIS
L L P L A A E
O R A P P L E L O C U M
A C E T K I
E A M R N A D A G G E R
C L O A K A N D O D A G G E R
G I L E S
L I T T L E C O R P O R A L
A O I N T R I N S I C
M A N L O G B I
A T L A S P R O V I S I O N
N L E A U N N E
T R Y S T E D P R E D I C T

Concise Crossword, page 40

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0801 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701
Kent, Surrey, Sussex	702
Dorset, Dorset & IOW	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset	705
Berkshire, Bucks, Oxon	706
Bucks, Herts & Essex	707
Northants, Suffolk, Cambs	708
West Mid & Shropshire & Gwent	709
Shropshire, Hereford & Worcester	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Leics & Humberside	713
Dyfed & Powys	714
Gwynedd & Clwyd	715
N W England	716
W & S Wales & Dees	717
N E England	718
Cumbria & Lake District	719
S W Scotland	720
W Central Scotland	721
Edin & Fife/Lothian & Borders	722
E Central Scotland	723
Grampians & E Highlands	724
N W Scotland	725
Orkney, Shetland & Shetland	726
N Ireland	727

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LONDON & SE traffic, roadworks

C. London (within N & S Circles)	731
M1/M25/M25A	732
M1/M25/M25A/M1	733
M1/M25/M25A/M1/M25	734
M25 London Orbital only	735

National traffic and roadworks

West Midlands	736
West Country	737
Wales	738
Midlands	739
East Angles	740
North & East England	741
North & West England	742
Scotland	743
Northern Ireland	744

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WEATHER

There will be a touch of frost in parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland at first. It will be another cold but largely dry day. There will be a lot of cloud over many eastern parts of England and Scotland with scattered wintry showers, especially in coastal counties. However it may become a little brighter. It will be windy over England and Wales, especially in the east, which will make it feel raw. Outlook: mostly dry and cold.

ABROAD

MIDWINTER: 1=thunder, 2=dew, 3=drizzle, 4=sun, 5=sleet, 6=snow, 7=fog, 8=cloud, 9=rain

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Notes
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	
Algeria	10-15	W 10-15	1-2	

AROUND BRITAIN

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Notes
Aberdeen	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	
Angley	0-11	W 10-15	1-2	

LIGHTNING TIMES

London 5.44 pm to 6.42 am
Bristol 5.54 pm to 6.51 am
Edinburgh 5.51 pm to 6.52 am
Manchester 5.51 pm to 6.52 am
Penzance 6.02 pm to 7.02 am

Sun rises: 6.42 am. Sun sets: 5.44 pm.
Moon rises: 3.23 am. Moon sets: 11.26 am.

Full moon March 8

TODAY

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Notes
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	

TODAY

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Notes
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	

TODAY

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Notes
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	
London	7-17	W 10-15	1-2	

TODAY

Information supplied by Met Office

THE TIMES NEWSPAPERS LIMITED, 1993. Published and printed by Times Newspapers Ltd at 1, Virginia Street, London E1 6RN, telephone 017-752 5000 and at Knowlsey Park Industrial Estate, Killinghall, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 9JZ, telephone 011-456 2000. Wednesday, March 3, 1993. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

Special report
on the capital
opportunities

Christopher Bruce
promises radical
change at Rambert

Lewis comes
of age
for England

MEDIA: THE
PAPER YOU
PRINT AT HOME
Page 32

THE TIMES

2

WEDNESDAY MARCH 3 1993

BUSINESS TODAY

ON ICE

The Bundesbank has
moved to dampen
expectations of a cut in
official German
interest rates at
tomorrow's meeting
Page 23

KEEPING COOL

The NAPF says more
employees shunned
pension schemes, but
workers have not been
scared off by the
Maxwell scandal
Page 22

IN THE COLD

The Abbey National is
ending its disastrous
foray into estate
agency, it unveiled a 9
per cent dip in full-year
profits
Page 23, *Tempos*, 25

THE POUND

US \$... 1.4505 (+0.57)
German mark... 2.3761 (+0.34)
Exchange index... 77.3 (+0.2)
Bank of England official close
(4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100... 2822.3 (+0.3)
Dow Jones... 3353.95 (+10.54)
Nikkei Ave... 16854.25 (+15.35)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base... 6%
3-month Interbank... 6.5%
US Federal Funds... 3%
3-month Treasury Bills... 2.97-2.98%
Long Bond... 8.44%

CURRENCIES

New York... London...
£/\$... 1.4485... 1.4480...
\$/£... 1.5215... 1.5210...
¥/£... 117.71... 117.70...
\$/¥... 1.0483... 1.0482...
London Foreign market close

GOLD

London Fixing (\$):
AM 328.00... PM 329.15
Close... 329.20-329.60
New York...
Comex... 330.05-330.55

RETAIL PRICES

RPI... 137.5 January (1.7%)
Denotes midday trading price

Fee for BCCI clear-up at £108m

Liquidators sorting out the BCCI affair
have run up fees and costs totalling £108
million but they are hoping to recover
billions of pounds from the bank's debtors

By PATRICIA TEHAN

TOUCHE Ross, the liquidator of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International SA, has been paid fees and expenses of \$153 million (£108 million) in the 18 months since its appointment.

The total value of fees for the liquidation of BCCI SA, which includes the English, Luxembourg, Scottish and Isle of Man businesses, excluding expenses, was £32.1 million in the 18 months to January 14.

Touche said last night that its fees are now in the region of £600,000 a week, and declining. Touche agreed that the figure may seem high to the thousands of creditors waiting for a payout, but a spokesman said that the level of fees needs to be considered in light of the scale and nature of the bank's operations.

A Touche spokesman said: "We are conscious that our fee is a very significant amount when viewed in isolation. In the context of the sums involved and the level of activity undertaken in the period, our fee can be viewed in a more objective manner."

Christopher Morris, joint liquidator to the collapsed bank, said: "When you are the liquidator of a bank, you are liquidating a live animal rather than a dead one."

He said the recovery of loans continues despite the fact that the bank is in liquidation. In the liquidation of a factory, he said, you can close the warehouse door, dismiss the staff and sell off the stock.

With a bank, there are many thousands of transactions in progress at the time of collapse. "These have to be closed for the benefit of the creditors," he said, adding that BCCI had billions of pounds of outstanding loans, thousands of individual accounts and thousands of creditors. Touche continued to operate the bank's loan book, comprising 97,000 accounts, from which it has realised \$311 million.

The spokesman said that Touche has also had to continue trade finance and treasury

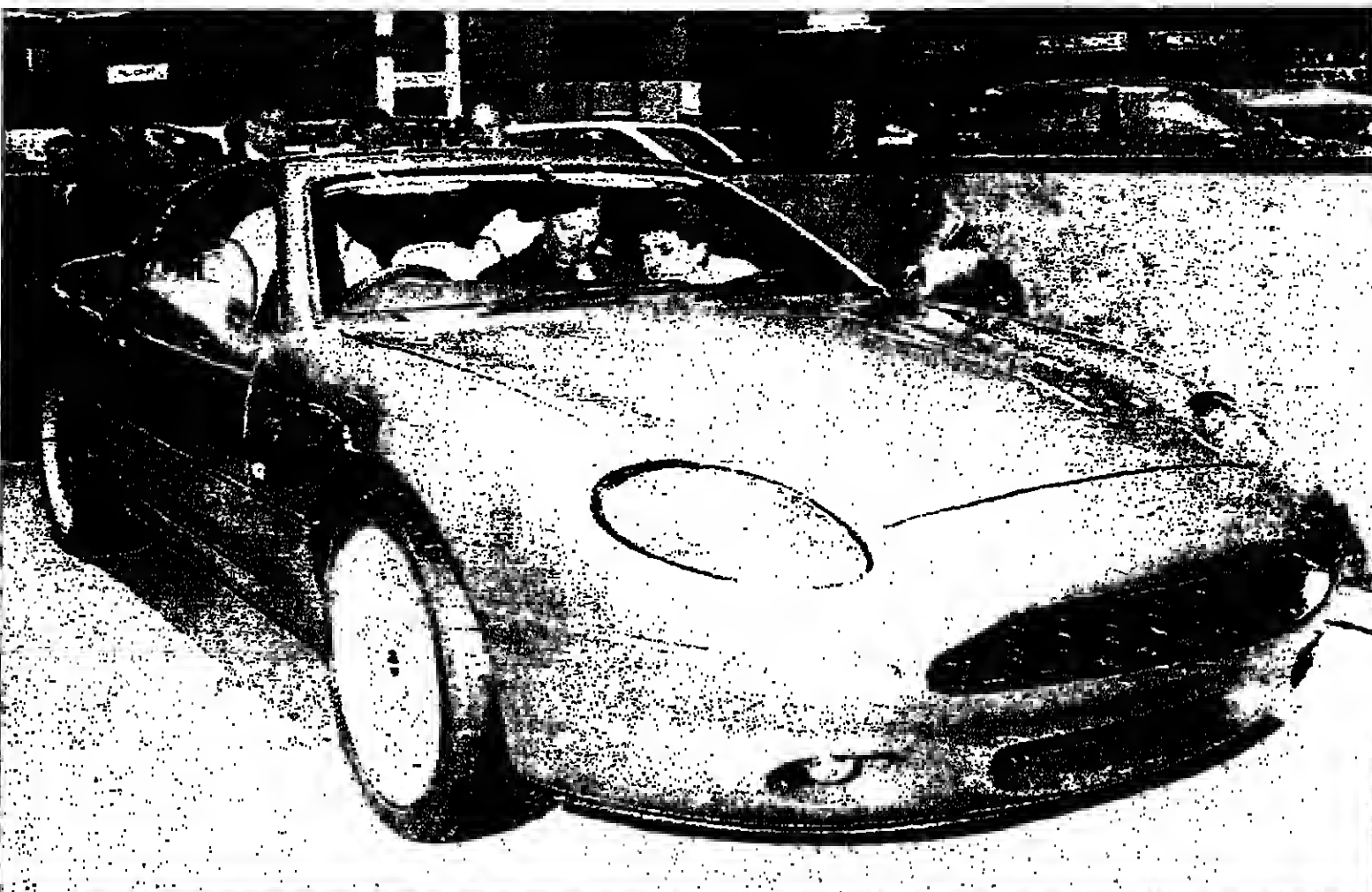
operations to close off open transactions and pursue amounts outstanding from more than 600 correspondent banks, where there were backlogs reflected in more than 55,000 reconciling items.

Liquidation activities also include the "investigation and pursuit of sums misappropriated from the bank, the handling of creditor claims against the bank, and the administration of approximately 27,000 payments to depositors."

About 450 Touche staff are involved in the liquidation, down from a peak of about 650.

The Touche spokesman said the liquidators expected to recover, anticipate recovering over \$1 billion from BCCI SA assets. Subject to approval by creditors and the courts they hope to realise between \$1.2 and \$2.2 billion from the Abu Dhabi authorities. Abu Dhabi has also waived its right to claim \$2.2 billion it alleges was misappropriated by the bank.

Touche hopes that a plea agreement in the US will result in the return of over \$250 million from a \$550 million fine imposed by the US courts and regulators.



Fast lane: Aston Martin unveiled its supercharged DB7 model at the Geneva Motor Show; the car goes into production next year

Buoyant sales cheer UK carmakers

FROM KEVIN EASON, MOTORING CORRESPONDENT, IN GENEVA

CAR sales figures to be released later this week will show a 12 per cent surge in February, confirming the end of a 22-year slump. The improvement follows a more modest one in January.

Carmakers attending the Geneva Motor Show report strengthening sales in Britain. On the Continent, by contrast, the most important markets — Germany, France, Italy and Spain — are drifting towards recession. A price war is possible as manufacturers fight to hold on to sales.

British car plants have been kept working through the domestic recession by buoyant exports. Now, carmakers are wondering whether the

growth in the UK market will be enough to offset losses abroad.

Peugeot Talbot, which exports 60 per cent of its cars, signalled the start of another tough year by laying off 3,500 production workers last week from its plant at Ryton, Coventry. The company blamed falling European sales.

Germany, where demand was strong after unification, suffered a 15 per cent drop in sales last month. Italy fell 10 per cent.

There was gloom at the opening of the Geneva show yesterday. Ford and General Motors, Vauxhall's parent company, both predicted a drop of 8 per cent in Euro-

pean sales this year. George Simpson, chairman of Rover — Britain's biggest car exporter, with export sales of 220,000 last year — said: "This is going to be another tough year. Just when we see some prospect of growth at home, we discover that things are going to be much harder in the other main European markets."

"We hope the growth at home will help offset any losses but there seems little prospect of that."

A price war has already broken out in the UK, where Vauxhall and Ford are battling for supremacy. At Geneva, Ford announced aggressive prices for its new

Mondeo model, which will be £100 to £500 cheaper than the Sierra, the model it replaces. The company is relying on the Mondeo to strengthen its UK market share, which has slipped badly recently. Vauxhall has been stealing Ford's thunder.

Ford is using increased safety as a selling-point for the Mondeo, offering an air bag safety device as standard. A month before the Mondeo's launch, however, Vauxhall has put air bags into its best-selling Cavalier range.

Nissan is confident that, despite growing difficulties in export markets, it can meet production and financial targets at its plant at Washing-

ton, Tyne and Wear. The plant bettered its 1991 profits of £18.4 million, though it had to bear the cost of launching the new Micra in 1992.

Nissan will announce improved profits in May and is confident it will achieve its aim of producing 270,000 cars, with up to 80 per cent for export.

Ian Gibson, managing director of Nissan's UK operation, said: "The commissioning of the new Micra plant at Washington proved remarkably trouble-free; our staff exceeded all the targets we set for quality, cost and efficiency."

British offensive, page 1

GA fails to return to profit

By SARAH BAGNALL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

HIGHER than expected losses from Hurricane Andrew stopped General Accident, the composite insurer, from reporting a return to profit for the year ended December 1992. Losses before tax were cut by £142 million to £29.3 million.

The company also launched a £110 million preference share issue, which boosts its solvency margin, a measure of financial strength, by about 3 points to 46 per cent. The funds, which join last September's £140 million issue, will repay debt and enable the company "to indulge in a

degree of selective growth", Nelson Robertson, GA's chief general manager, said.

The final dividend is unchanged at 17.05p, making a total of 26.75p. For the third year running, GA has dipped into reserves to pay the £120 million of dividend. The preference shares cost a further £22 million. The shares fell 10p to 58.5p.

Total underwriting losses fell £50 million to £510.1 million, with the improvement restricted by losses of £65 million from Hurricane Andrew, £20 million of which were in the last quarter, and

losses of £47 million from other storms.

Mr Robertson said the UK improved the most with underwriting losses cut by £167 million to £175.2 million. The company suffered mortgage indemnity losses of £53.1 million, compared with £46.2 million last time.

Losses in the US deteriorated from £120.2 million to £210.5 million, partly because of Hurricane Andrew, while Canada reported a doubling in the underwriting loss to £18.7 million.

Tempos, page 25

Restructure Ofgas, not British Gas

Two million of us are small shareholders in British Gas. To Sir James McKinnon, retiring director-general of gas supply, we are monopoly capitalists exploiting the people. Frankly, it does not feel like that. Many bought the shares on the basis of the government prospectus as a safe but unattractive source of retirement income. They must now feel like the little people being attacked by the bureaucrats.

Perhaps the mythical Sid, used on government promotional advertisements, was to blame. He was meant to epitomise the new popular shareholder, in whose person the interests of investor, producer and consumer would be unified. In the eyes of smart and superior persons, the 2 million "Sids" who have stayed with the company since 1986 have instead become by-words for lower-class mug punters who can safely be ignored. That is a measure of the transition from Thatcherism to John Major's supposedly classless society.

The latest submission by Sir James's Ofgas to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, presents its final solution. British Gas would be carved into pieces, most of the vertical slices then being cut up horizontally.

Regrettably, it seems that nearly all the bills would still require some regulation, along with any new competitors shoe-horned into the market. The proposed new transmission company would be at least as heavily regulated as British Gas, on a risk of return formula that implied no risk.

With luck, the discussion document will mark the high tide of utility regulation in Britain. There is every reason to think that, if the monopolies commission agreed and government passed a new law to overturn the Gas Act and nullify the privatisation prospectus, gas prices to the consumer would rise. The great advantage of having two million shareholders, nearly all consumers, is that they might examine this before it becomes a fait accompli like the electricity restructuring, which has swelled electricity bills so needlessly.

The first question to ask is why such an important British industrial champion needs to be attacked and destroyed. Does the



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

regulation by Ofgas, far more it is the legacy of the company's former monopoly buying power, which allowed it to strike tough deals with North Sea oil companies on behalf of consumers. Does the monopoly supplier treat its household customers with contempt? Well, not according to an Ofgas consumer survey quoted endlessly by British Gas, which put it top of the utility league for service.

One problem is resentment among other oil and gas companies, which want a slice of the cake but cannot break into the consumer market at present low prices. As Ofgas notes: "For so long as competitors have to try to compete with a vertically integrated monopoly that dominates all parts of the gas supply chain, competition will never flourish and almost certainly will have to be propped up by continuous regulatory interventions." That is no cause to legislate for

shareholders in Shell or Exxon against those of British Gas.

The other problem is Ofgas itself. The regulator had such a weak brief that Sir James had to battle hard to make his voice heard in the boardroom of what was then an arrogant British Gas. That battle has led to destructive confrontation, in which the regulator regards the regulated company as its enemy. This is not a matter of personalities, but springs from pitting a regulator against a single company.

The same set-up faces BT. Ofel has a new director-general on the way. If he wishes to make a mark, he should avoid saying all is well and attack BT, perhaps on the same lines as the Ofgas approach to British Gas. Investors should take note and would be wise to boycott the government's sale of a third tranche of BT shares unless it is accompanied by firm long-term government commitments.

For Ofgas, the solution is easier. Sir James should not be replaced. Ofgas should be merged into a new energy industry regulator, whose terms of reference would include a brief to respect the interests of regulated companies, as long as they do not act unfairly against consumers.

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Recruitment Consultants

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Rise in numbers shunning firms' pension schemes

A RISE in the number of employees deciding not to join company pension schemes last year probably owed more to the prolonged recession than to fears of a Maxwell-style plundering of pension assets, the National Association of Pension Funds said.

The NAPF's annual survey of occupational pension schemes showed that the number of employees staying out of company schemes, even if they were eligible to join, rose from 16 per cent in 1991 to 19 per cent in 1992. However, Brian MacMahon, chairman of the NAPF, said: "With non-joiners, it may be that one earner is on short-time working or has lost his or her job. People have to pay their bills. If it is a question of buying food or putting aside 5 per cent for pension contributions, food is obviously a priority."

In its first report since the full extent of the Maxwell scandal came to light, the NAPF found that only a "negligible" 1 per cent of those eligible for continuing membership of schemes had withdrawn, in spite of increased fears about security of pension fund assets.

For the first time, the NAPF had asked about levels of withdrawal, following suggestions that "large numbers of employees are withdrawing from occupational pension schemes, even though they remain eligible for continuing

■ Company pension schemes are appointing more employees as trustees in the wake of the Maxwell scandal and are equalising the retirement age at 65

membership". It concluded: "It seems there is no significant movement of this nature."

The proportion of employee or pensioner representatives on boards of trustees rose by 6 per cent in 1992. Of 765 private-sector and 14 public-sector schemes replying, 65 per cent now include employees other than management among trustees. Mr MacMahon said this was a sign of pension funds' "increased vigilance" since Maxwell.

The number of companies equalising retirement ages for men and women at 65 continues to increase. Of the 85 per cent of schemes that have equalised, 59 per cent have chosen 65 as the retiring age for both men and women, up from 57 per cent in 1991. Only 28 per cent of schemes (32 per cent last year) opted for a retirement age of 60 for both men and women.

The government is widely expected to opt for a state pension age of 65 when it produces a white paper on state pension ages in the spring.

The NAPF has called for a flexible decade of retirement,

allowing people to retire before or after 65. A majority of pension schemes raising the pension age will, however, allow people to retire at the previous normal age without reducing their pensions. Of schemes that have equalised, 40 per cent allow this for women only.

For the first time, the NAPF asked companies if their schemes made provision for dependants other than children or spouses if members died. It found that 62 per cent of schemes did so.

However, 22 per cent of schemes said they paid pensions to dependants other than spouses or children only in "extreme cases": 37 per cent did so "occasionally".

NAPF members run pension schemes covering an estimated 7 million employees, pay pensions to more than 4 million pensioners, and invest about £250 million of assets. A total of 747 organisations, or about half of those approached, replied to the questionnaire. The organisations run 852 schemes, covering 4.5 million active members, or about 40 per cent of members of company schemes.



Waiting on a decision from the FDA: Cedric Scroggs, chief executive of Fisons

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Bad debts send Baltic into red by £6.5m

BAD debts and provisions of £13 million have sent Baltic, the finance leasing group, into a loss for the year of £6.5 million, after profits of £9.1 million last time. The recession is hitting the company on two fronts: customers' deteriorating finances have caused Baltic to provide £5.6 million against bad debts, and asset deflation is chipping away at the realisable value of leased property and equipment.

Excluding discontinued businesses, gross profits fell to £2.3 million from £21 million in 1991 but interest costs remained high at £11 million. Michael Goddard, chairman of Baltic, said the lower contribution from leasebroking reflected the contraction in bank lending and lower levels of tax capacity in the market for finance leases. The company is conserving resources and the total dividend for the year is reduced to 1p (4.3p). Since the year-end, the group's contract hire business has been sold, reducing group borrowings by £24 million.

Shares in Raine fall

SHARES in Raine Industries, the housebuilder and contractor, dived 13p to 100p as the group attempted to talk down some of the stock market's wilder expectations of an imminent upsurge in the housing market. Raine announced pre-tax profits of £2.76 million (£2.43 million) in the half year to end-December. The interim dividend is held at 2.0p but will again partly be paid out of reserves. The profits last year had to be restated and reduced by £3.4 million in accordance with the new FRS 3 accounting principle.

Britain courts Carman

CARMAN, the South Korean maker of in-car CD players and radios, is planning to set up a factory in Britain to employ about 135 people in its first phase and double that number within two years. Carman is understood to be negotiating with the development authorities in Tyne and Wear and in Ulster, but has yet to state its preference. The Northern Ireland industrial development board in Belfast has applied for outline planning permission to build a factory on 16 acres of an existing industrial estate at Dungannon, Co Tyrone.

Harrington ahead

HARRINGTON Kilbride, publisher of international trade journals and consumer magazines, lifted pre-tax profits to £1.86 million (£1.3 million) in the year to end-December, on turnover up 68 per cent to £15.4 million (£9.2 million). Earnings per share were 11.8p (10.2p). A final dividend of 3p (nil) a share makes a total 4.5p (1p). Present trading is "significantly" ahead of last year. International operations now account for 52 per cent of turnover, up from 33 per cent in 1991, and further expansion is expected this year.

Serco profit leaps 37%

SHARES in Serco, the task management group, leapt 47p to 810p yesterday after a 37 per cent rise in profits in the year to end-December. Pre-tax profits rose to £7.2 million (£5.2 million) on turnover up 43 per cent to £149.6 million (£104.9 million). Fully diluted earnings per share were 37p (30.2p). A final dividend of 9.5p (8p) a share makes a total 14p (11.9p). Profits and turnover were lifted by the acquisition of International Aeradio Limited, which provides civil aviation services.

Wm Sinclair slips

A SHIFT in trading patterns depressed interim profits at William Sinclair Holdings, the garden and pet products group. Sales were up from £16.3 million to £16.6 million. However, profits fell to £1.4 million from £1.7 million and Tom Sinclair, chairman, said customers are demanding shorter delivery times for garden products, which will move sales and profits into the second half. Earnings per share fell to 4.4p (5.8p). The interim is maintained at 1.7p.

Kalon lifts payout

KALON Group, the decorative paints and building chemicals company whose failed bid for Manders cost it £1.56 million, is raising its dividend from 2.2p to 3.2p a share for 1992 after pre-tax profits of £10.6 million (£9.2 million) on turnover of £106.3 million (£98.5 million). Net earnings, shown under the new accounting format, fell 2 per cent from 5.3p to 5.2p a share. Roger Boissier, chairman, is optimistic despite the continuing weak economy.

Burnfield's French buy

BURNFIELD, the industrial control and measurement equipment group, announced a rise in pre-tax profits from £1.2 million to £2.7 million and the acquisition for £3 million of Desgranges et Huot, a French manufacturer of pressure calibration equipment. Burnfield's turnover increased from £21 million to £30 million in the year to December 31, due to first contributions from Malvern Instruments and Budenburg. Dividend is 5.75p again.

Towles votes 'concern'

LONDON City Equities has a minority of the votes in Towles, the Loughborough hostery and knitwear maker, despite taking its stake above 50 per cent. London has 51.4 per cent of shares after buying a further 6.4 per cent but says directors holding 18.8 per cent have three times as many votes. Preference shares represent 3 per cent of the capital and 33 per cent of the votes. London City said the voting structure of Towles "continues to cause concern".

Tempus, page 25

Sharp advance by PolyGram despite flat music market

By MARTIN WALLER
DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

MUSIC-lovers convinced that they are paying over the odds for compact discs in Britain will be enraged by indications from PolyGram, one of the world's three biggest record companies, that the next move in prices is more likely to be up than down.

PolyGram's policy of buying CD pressing plants to produce its own artists' material, and the resulting higher margins, helped the group towards a 13 per cent improvement in net income in 1992, to 506 million Dutch guilders (£189.7 million), on sales up 5 per cent to 6.6 billion guilders, or 9 per cent excluding currency fluctuations.

This was despite a depressed worldwide music market. Although the trend towards the CD and away from the virtually defunct vinyl record and the music



Levy: optimistic

cassette continued, the number of units sold declined marginally.

Alain Levy, president and chief executive, is wary of putting all the blame on the recession. He believes the quality of talent being marketed is not high enough to retain record-buyers' loyalty. The 20 per cent devaluation of sterling since the autumn has put

pressure on CD prices in Britain, some of which are sourced from abroad.

PolyGram, owner of record labels such as Polydor, Island, Decca and Mercury, is quoted on the Amsterdam and New York stock exchanges but 80 per cent owned by Philips of The Netherlands. The company is raising its full-year dividend from 0.6 of a guilder to 0.65.

Mr Levy was optimistic that PolyGram would continue to grow and see a further improvement in margins. A venture into film, however, made moderate losses.

The new digital compact cassette format, launched before Christmas, is crucial for the future of Philips, which is expected to announce losses of 100 million to 150 million guilders tomorrow. Mr Levy admitted that customer acceptance had been held back by the simultaneous launch of Sony's MiniDisc system.



General Accident

SUBSTANTIAL RECOVERY

1992 RESULTS

	Year to 31.12.92 Unaudited £m	Year to 31.12.91 Audited £m
General Premiums	3,831.5	3,219.0
Life Premiums	790.4	551.9
Net Investment Income	464.8	389.1
General Underwriting Loss	(510.1)	(569.1)
Loss before Taxation	(29.3)	(171.6)
Loss attributable to Shareholders	(26.9)	(139.4)
Earnings per Ordinary Share	(7.0p)	(32.1p)
Dividend per Share	26.75p	26.75p

- Pre-tax loss of £29.3m represents an improvement of £142.3m – despite losses on Hurricane 'Andrew' of £65m net.
- Fourth quarter pre-tax profit of £5.8m maintains positive trend of underlying recovery.
- UK underwriting losses substantially reduced.
- US results distorted by Hurricane 'Andrew'.
- Good performance in Canada and the Pacific.
- Outstanding progress in Life operations.
- Second issue of Preference Shares will raise £110m and add 2.6 points to current solvency margin of 43.3%.

Nelson Robertson, Chief Executive, commented:
"A substantial recovery has been achieved. We are now well placed to take advantage of opportunities for profitable growth."

General Accident plc

General Accident plc, World Headquarters: Pitheavlis, Perth, Scotland PH2 0NH

Abbey property agency division up for sale

By Patricia Tehan

ABBEY National is to end its costly foray into the estate agency business with the decision to put its loss-making Cornerstone arm up for sale. Abbey revealed its decision to sell the 355-branch Cornerstone business as it unveiled a 9 per cent fall in pre-tax profits for 1992 to £564 million and a leap of more than 100 per cent in bad debt provisions from £155 million to £322 million. The estate agency business incurred a £20 million loss. Abbey also made an exceptional £126 million write-off — the value of estate agency goodwill and a £12 million exceptional charge for the cost of reorganising the Cornerstone chain.

Abbey National has joined the ranks of financial institutions trying to extricate themselves from the estate agency business that failed to produce the expected benefits

He said Abbey entered the estate agency business in 1987 to safeguard its market share of mortgage lending and insurance commissions in the face of growing competition. The business was also thought to be profitable. James Tyrrell, the finance director, said the business had cost Abbey £226 million over the last five years, before tax relief, including the £138 million write-off last year. The bank has spent about £160 million buying the estate agency business since 1987. The goodwill value of the business in the books is now just £15 million.

However, Mr Tyrrell said the company hopes the sale will realise more than just the value of the goodwill. Peter Toeman, banking analyst at Hoare Govett, estimates the sale could realise £30 million, including the value of net assets. Abbey was not alone in moving into estate agency in the mid-eighties, and is not the only firm now attempting to pull out after years of losses. The Prudential sold its loss-making business in 1990. Cheltenham & Gloucester got only £1.7 million for the sale of 22 branches. Bristol & West is believed to be trying to sell its Hampton estate agency. General Accident revealed yesterday that losses on its 390-branch estate agency business increased from £17.8 million to £18.8 million. But Nelson Robertson, the chief general manager, said GA had no current plans to put the estate agency business up for sale. He said it would not take a big shift in the property mar-

ket to return to profits and the estate agency business generates a considerable amount of life business for the company. Abbey's £322 million bad debt provisions for 1992 include £184 million relating to UK residential mortgages, a £62 million general provision, and £47 million provisions in its French and Spanish subsidiaries. The bank also had a £101 million exceptional credit from the sale of 29 million unclaimed shares. Sir Christopher said the economic outlook remained uncertain, but there were signs that the low point of the housing cycle may have passed, giving grounds for cautious optimism. The company also revealed yesterday it has not renewed mortgage indemnity insurance with its three insurers. Instead, it is considering setting up a captive insurance company. The dividend for the year is being increased from 10.5p to 11.5p, a 9.5 per cent rise.

Tempos, page 25

Analysts propose formula to interpret FRS3 figures

By George Sivell, City Editor

THE Institute of Investment Management and Research has fallen short of recommending a formula for calculating earnings per share figures for price/earnings ratios in its recommendations on how analysts and the media should handle figures published by companies under the new FRS3 reporting standard. The IIMR, however, has proposed a method for deriving a headline earnings figure, similar to the American-style net income number. The headline earnings figure includes trading profits and losses, results of discontinued businesses and the tax charge, but excludes profits and losses on the sale of fixed assets and disposals, and the cost of eliminating a discontinued operation or making an acquisition. The IIMR says: "It is clearly desirable to define an earnings figure which can be used as an unambiguous reference point — between users, the press, the statistical companies

This also raises the possibility that such a figure could be used in preliminary and interim announcements. A lack of ambiguity in these announcements is important, since new and often significant information is involved and the market will react rapidly. On finding an earnings per share figure, the IIMR says: "In many contexts, the historic price/earnings ratio is a published figure — it is shown in newspapers, statistical services, and other objective documentation. For such purposes the entry of a significant element of judgement into the calculation of a price/earnings ratio is undesirable and probably impractical."

This is in keeping with the Accounting Standards Board wish to focus investors on to the wide range of figures to be supplied by companies and to

wear the investing community off the bottom line earnings figure, which have proved so open to manipulation. One large firm of stockbrokers said last night the IIMR's aims were laudable. It said fewer than 10 per cent of fund manager clients had worked out an objective method yet of using the FRS3 figure. The IIMR, formerly the Society of Investment Analysts, wants replies to its draft by the end of April. FRS3 applies to all company accounts issued for years ending after June 22 this year. The Hundred Group of finance directors said: "We recognise there is a demand for a headline calculation of a company's earnings per share. If financial results are to be considered on a comparable basis, it is not satisfactory to leave such adjustments wholly to the discretion of individual companies as presently proposed by FRS3."

Tempos, page 25

House clash on Black Wednesday

By Nicholas Wood, Political Correspondent

THE precise cost of Black Wednesday, when the Bank of England raised the reserves in a forlorn attempt to shore up sterling within the European exchange-rate mechanism, will never be known, senior Downing Street officials admitted yesterday. The disclosure came after a clash in the Commons between John Major and John Smith over the prime minister's commitment to open government. The Labour leader accused Mr Major of "covering up the incompetence" of the Chancellor through his refusal to give the figures. The prime minister countered by claiming Mr Smith was paying no regard to the national interest. Later, Downing Street officials said "you can get any number you like" for the reserves expended, depending on the dates chosen for calculating the sum. "I don't think there will be a figure that will be broadly sensible," an aide said.



CHRISTOPHER TEGENHAT, PETER ROSS, JOHN SMITH

Allied Irish writes down GPA stake

ALLIED Irish Banks, Ireland's biggest clearing bank, has written down its stake in GPA, the troubled Irish airline leasing group, from \$12 a share to just \$1 a share (Patricia Tehan writes).

The writedown follows GPA's decision to offer preference shares to investors at \$1 each to raise \$200 million. AIB unveiled pre-tax profits of £171.6 million (£184.3 million) for the nine months to end-December. The bank has changed its year-end to December 31, so the result is not comparable with the £185.8 million made in 1992.

AIB is paying a total dividend of 18p for the nine months, equating to a notional annual dividend of 18.7p (18.25p).

BP stake sale foils Minorco

BP has sold its 49 per cent stake in the copper-gold-uranium Olympic Dam mine in Australia to Western Mining for \$455 million, after Western Mining's decision to exercise pre-emption rights. Minorco, the natural resources group that had hoped to acquire the 49 per cent stake, said it was "very disappointed". Acquisition of a stake in Olympic Dam would have helped fulfil Minorco's ambition of expanding its worldwide natural resources interests.

Tempos, page 25

Peugeot vote

Peugeot Talbot workers have accepted company assurances about job security and ended the threat of industrial action. The Coventry workers voted in a ballot by 2,157 to 884 in favour of accepting the assurances.

Brabant rebuff

Brabant Resources has rejected the takeover bid by Aberdeen Petroleum, saying the Aberdeen share price was inflated by hopes that Aberdeen would itself be the subject of a bid. Aberdeen is offering 35 shares for ten Brabant.

Ross buys rival

Ross Group, the consumer products and technical services company, has acquired the assets and goodwill of Ambitron Technologies from the receiver for an undisclosed cash sum. Ambitron makes relocatable container systems and was previously a competitor of a Ross subsidiary.

Job cuts

Parke-Davies, the drugs company, is cutting 300 jobs at its Marnhill plant, near Pontypool, Gwent, over the next two years. Separately, Lucas, the electrical giant, said it would make 90 workers redundant at its Cwmbran plant.

Rhino expands

Rhino is paying £275,000 to buy Byetware, the game store, from the receiver. Cash for the deal will be raised by issuing 948,276 new Rhino shares.

Broken promise costs Nissan £7m

By A Correspondent

NISSAN, the Japanese car-maker, was ordered to pay £6.9 million to its former UK distributor after going back on a pledge to help sell unwanted vehicles. The company was told to pay the money to the independently owned Nissan UK, which said it had been promised help to boost flagging sales of the British-made Bluebird saloon. Nissan UK, owned by Octav Botnar, agreed to take 2,000 models each month until a stock of 12,700 had been sold, the High Court heard. In return, Nissan promised subsidies of £6 million, starting in January 1990. The judge, Vice Chancellor Donald Nicholls, ordered Nissan to honour the deal and to pay the £6 million, along with £900,000 in interest and value-added tax. Nissan UK was awarded costs for the five-day case, estimated at £200,000. Nissan claimed that the distributor broke the deal by

failing to keep up with its monthly schedule for collecting the cars. The judge said: "Nissan UK planned to take, and did take and pay for, cars it did not particularly want. But Nissan Manufacturing insisted Nissan UK had to take the entire fleet in order for a deal on the subsidy to be done."



Botnar: awarded costs

Brittan condemns America on steel

By Colin Naeve, World Trade Correspondent

THE European Commission upped the ante in the transatlantic trade dispute. It submitted a formal request under GATT rules for urgent consultations with Washington to challenge punitive anti-dumping duties America imposed on Community steel. Sir Leon Brittan, the trade policy commissioner, said Brussels wanted to establish whether multilateral free trade rules had been observed. The American move, which imposed 109 per cent duty on British steel, had sent the "wrong political signal" when the world needed reassuring about Washington's commitment to free trade. The commission attacked the Americans for relying on the "best information available" from companies that complain. This makes it costly for steel companies accused of dumping to defend themselves, especially when small volumes of steel are involved. The American method of calculating subsidies also came

under attack. Amid Community attempts to shed steel-making capacity, Germany's Treuhander privatisation agency said Eiko Stahl, the biggest steelmaker in eastern Germany, had drawn up modernisation plans for which it sought DM1 billion in government aid. West German steelmakers proposed that Eiko should be closed. Edward Reuter, management board chairman of Daimler-Benz, the leading German industrial group, called on America and the Community to consider new ways of liberalising trade to prevent the "cold peace" that has followed the cold war from turning into economic war. He suggested a transatlantic free trade zone. Concern about world trade was also voiced by Arthur Dunkel, GATT's director-general. He said a trade agreement had to be agreed by the end of this year, or it might be "at best academic, at worst irrelevant."

Bundesbank dampens rate cut hopes

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

THE Bundesbank has moved to dampen expectations of cuts in official German interest rates before tomorrow's council meeting. The central bank, which holds a weekly tender for commercial bank borrowers today, announced a fixed rate of 8.49 per cent, unchanged from last week's tender. The use of a fixed rate usually means the bank wishes to send a strong signal to the markets about its preferred level of interest rates and German economists said the action made cuts in the 9 per cent lombard rate and 8 per cent discount rate this week far less likely. The mark, weak since the Group of Seven meeting at the weekend, strengthened on the news. The dollar closed lower at DM1.6393 after Monday's close of DM1.6475 but sterling held up well, closing at DM2.3781 from DM2.3747 on Monday. Economists still believe another modest cut in German rates is likely, based on January's fall in M3 money supply and below-inflation wage settlements in the

public sector and banking industry, which were cited as giving more scope for policy easing by Helmut Schlesinger, Bundesbank president, last weekend. Some economists said it was possible the fixed rate may simply be designed to iron out market rate distortions after Monday's substantial easing in commercial bank reserve requirements, which has added liquidity to the banking system and pushed down short rates. They said the Bundesbank may still use tomorrow to announce a lower fixed-rate tender for next week. Joachim Fels of Goldman Sachs in Frankfurt says that is unlikely. "The Bundesbank likes to retain an element of surprise but I don't think it would irritate the markets by signalling no change in policy and then changing it," he believes. Official interest rate cuts may now be delayed until March 18 or even April 1 for several reasons. First, the bank wants to keep some political pressure on the parties negotiating a Solidarity Pact, which would formalise lower wage deals and agree cuts in Germany's public deficit. Agreement was

scheduled for next week but Otto Lambrecht, leader of the Free Democrats, said parts of the agreement may have to go to the German parliament for arbitration. The Bundesbank has said lower rates are not contingent upon a Solidarity Pact but would certainly help. The second, probably more important reason, is tactical. Moves in the discount rate have coincided with weakness in the French franc and pressure in the exchange-rate mechanism. Pressures in the ERM are not acute at present and the Bundesbank may want to save some ammunition for possible turmoil before the French election on March 21. Eddie George, governor-elect of the Bank of England, told a private symposium in Tokyo there were considerable dangers in a premature move to fixed exchange rates before sufficient and lasting economic convergence in Europe and that this could cause political division rather than cohesion. The Treasury said yesterday that Britain's official gold and currency reserves fell \$59 million in February, having risen by \$38 million in January.



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Interim Financial Highlights Half Year to 31 December 1992 (unaudited)			
	91	92	
Profit before tax	£26.8m	£29.1m	+ 9%
Earnings per ordinary share	4.7p	4.9p	+ 4%
Net dividend per ordinary share	1.5p	1.7p	+13%



If you would be interested in a copy of the 1993 Interim Statement please contact David Beckley, Hays Plc, Hays House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5HJ. Telephone 0453 302203. This advertisement has been approved by Touche Ross & Co who are authorised to carry on investment business by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales.

Small companies' champion takes on the Stock Exchange

As the debate about the fate of the USM nears a crucial deadline this week, Jim Levi finds the Cinderella sector of the market is fighting back

Richard Balarkas would probably prefer it if you did not describe him as a gamekeeper-turned-poacher. He is still hopeful that a fruitful dialogue can develop with his former employers on Throgmorton Street.

Until last August, Mr Balarkas was a Stock Exchange bureaucrat, heading a department whose main task was to investigate ways the exchange could make its services attractive to small, growing companies. Companies with a stock market value of less than £200 million still make up the bulk of quoted shares. Now, Mr Balarkas is chief executive of The City Group for Smaller Companies, or Ciso, a ginger group he set up with the support of Andrew Beeson, senior partner of Beeson Gregory, the stockbroker.

Ciso was launched in December, just as the Stock Exchange announced its own plan to close down the Unlisted Securities Market in 1995. The latter may have been the right decision. Listing conditions are now almost as rigorous as those for a full listing. But it looked ineptly timed and sent out the wrong kind of message to the investing public and expansion-minded companies. It made the exchange appear to have no interest in providing a second-tier market for companies unable to meet the requirements of a full listing.

Last week saw the unnecessary expensive exercise of bringing a company called Atrous to the stock market. Atrous, which makes shower screens and mirrors, decided to reverse into a shell company called URS International to get its quote because of the USM closure plan. The whole process is expected to cost the company £500,000 — roughly half its latest estimated annual profits. The Atrous management, and other groups, must wonder why a market quote cannot be achieved less expensively.

The recession has been very rough on smaller quoted companies. Indeed, many have buckled under. But such businesses are sensitive to the level of interest rates, and the collapse of borrowing costs since "Sunny Wednesday" has led to a surge of interest in smaller company shares.

This has happened just as Stock Exchange officialdom appeared to be losing interest. Meanwhile, smaller companies are as anxious as their bigger brothers to raise new equity capital before the hoped-for economic recovery and they need a supportive stock exchange to help them do it.

The Balarkas message to his former bosses is: don't close the USM until you have found something to replace it. But the consultative period the exchange has allowed for discussion on the USM issue expires on Friday and officials at the exchange do not expect the response they have had so far to change minds. "The decision to close the USM was made after an awful lot of research," one said.



Message to the Stock Exchange: Richard Balarkas says the USM should not close without a replacement

In a few weeks, Ciso has emerged as a powerful lobby campaigning for a better smaller companies market. Ciso now has 80 members, including leading merchant banks and institutions. The Treasury, the Bank of England, the Securities and Investments Board and the trade department have all, Mr Balarkas says, given Ciso's aims their approval.

"We would like the new smaller companies market to remain within the existing framework provided by the Stock Exchange but under independent management," he says. "If that cannot happen, he says, Ciso plans to go it alone and set up the British equivalent of Nasdaq in America. "Nasdaq is a great market for growth companies and for investors and does not just close down when the US economy is in recession," he says scathingly. "In London, the market for smaller companies has been in a state of constant tangle for years and in this last recession the whole structure appeared to collapse completely. The provision of a public market should be prepared to operate a much more stable regime."

Brian Winterlood, who used to be known as Mr USM, is much more sanguine about the situation. His Winterlood Securities makes markets in a thousand smaller company shares and he agrees the Stock Exchange in the past has "dragged its feet and been

reluctant to replace the old USM". But he believes there is nothing inherently wrong with the present treatment of smaller companies "that a bull market cannot put right".

He longs for the restoration of the pre-Big Bang single-capacity jobbing system for trading in smaller companies. "Under that system the jobber acts as policeman of the market as well as the trader," he says. Mr Winterlood also longs for the return of individual stockbroking firms sponsoring new issues of smaller companies at not-so-demanding prices. A bull market in smaller companies is developing, with about 65 per cent of daily volumes now outside the FT-SE 100. Investment trusts and unit trusts specialising in smaller companies are back in favour.

Sir Peter Michael, the electronics entrepreneur, built up and sold UBI to Cardion Communications five years ago for £526 million. He recognises the role the USM played in helping UBI grow rapidly in the eighties.

Sir Peter is now chairman of Pilot Investment Trust. Pilot, launched on the stock market this week, has adopted the brave policy of investing only in shares with stock market values of £30 million or less. This approach has earned the trust the nickname PITs. Sir Peter said: "There are nearly a thousand companies to choose from

and some of them are going to be the excellent growth companies of the future. They need to be nurtured, loved and cared for."

In the past few years, these stock market Cinderellas have been having a difficult time. Sir Peter said: "A number of securities houses have stopped trading in them and three or four hundred were taken off the market altogether."

Yet there is plenty of evidence to suggest that, though the risks of investing in small companies are greater, the rewards are substantially higher than investing exclusively in blue chips.

What really disturbs Sir Peter is that London cannot provide a proper stock market platform for the high-tech growth companies of the future. "It is absolutely crazy when European growth companies get their quotations on the Nasdaq instead," he says. "The London market does not seem to understand that this sector is where the economy actually grows from."

Richard Balarkas likens the development of companies to the various stages of evolution, with giant blue chip companies such as Unilever, Glaxo and Shell seen as equivalent to homo sapiens in all his/her glory. "Unfortunately at the smaller companies end of the market there is such confusion that we still appear to be in a state of primeval slime," he says.

TEMPUS

Earnings, what earnings?

IF THE City hoped that the Institute of Investment Management and Research would rummage through the FRSS accounting standard and come up with a single, simple formula for calculating earnings, it will be sorely disappointed. Instead the IIMR has come to the same conclusion as the Accounting Standards Board before it — that companies are too complex to have the result of their operations represented in a single figure.

This is laudable but hardly helpful to the hard-pressed investor who wants his information to be as concise as possible. The IIMR proposal of a headline earnings figure, which includes trading and any rationalisation costs, but excludes capital items, could create a minefield of earnings figures. Every company is likely to have at least three sets: the statutory earnings per share based on the profit for the year figure in its FRSS accounts, the headline

IIMR figure, and the company's own figure, designed to flatter its performance.

At least the IIMR has decided to include reorganisations costs. That alone will have a fundamental effect on corporate behaviour. There will no longer be any incentive for companies to make heavy provisions for future reorganisation in a single year.

The IIMR's refusal to give any hard rules for calculating prospective earnings will create yet more diversity. Each broking firm will use its own methodology. At least this will create a freer market in research, since the brokers with the most effective systems should produce the most accurate forecasts and enhance their following among professional investors. Private investors, by contrast, are at risk of being confused. There is no simple answer. When Tempus quotes an earnings figure or p/e ratio it will describe and justify its constituents.

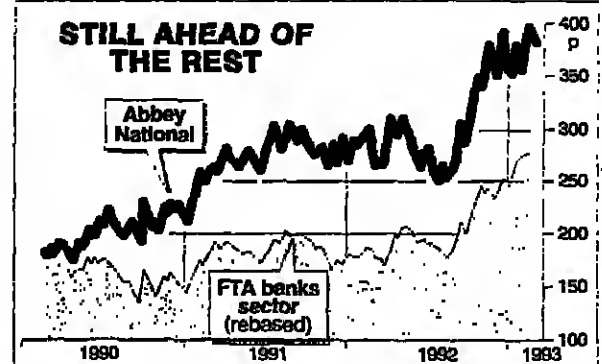
Abbey National

LESS than four years after flotation, Abbey National has confirmed that it suffers from banana skin syndrome, like so much of Britain's financial industry. While its core business of savings and mortgages is as robust as ever, almost all its attempts to diversify have turned to ash.

Abbey's decision to sell Cornerstone at the bottom of the market looks like a classic case of mistiming. In reality the group has little to lose from ridding itself of the business now. A speedy sale will save it from further losses and even if there was a miraculous recovery in the housing market, Cornerstone would make a £20 million profit at best in 1994 which would not enhance its value significantly.

Abbey poured almost £300 million into its estate agency

business. Cornerstone is now in its books for an estimated £35 million including net assets, but the group is unlikely to receive even that from the sale. Estate agencies currently sell for about £70,000 a branch which puts a £25 million price on Cornerstone. The market will fret over other aspects of Abbey business. The group's decision to self-insure its mortgage indemnity business, with an unquantified measure of reinsurance exposes it to a new dimension of risk. Bad debt provisions are unlikely to fall much this year since the group still has 9,300 homes to sell. Abbey's shares have performed tremendously but they cannot defy gravity much longer.



Fisons

THERE is potential for recovery at Fisons but there are still significant issues that could hinder it. Cedric Scroggs has refocused the group on the pharmaceuticals and scientific instruments businesses, tackled production problems and made headway in improving Fisons' relationship with the US Food and Drug Administration. While the financial benefits will come through, these results reflect the costs of these actions.

The manufacturing problems in pharmaceuticals are largely ended. But the expiry of initial US solution patent this summer poses fresh difficulties. It also puts immense pressure on the launch of Tilde, Fisons' new asthma drug. The launch is already being criticised by some analysts, who are sceptical about the decision to market it alongside Rhonoplen, Fisons' other asthma drug.

Fisons Instruments, which saw a 71 per cent fall in profits, has suffered from price competition from its dollar-based competitors. Any recovery will be hampered by continued weak demand for high-ticket items. There are more positive signals at Fisons than six months ago, although recovery will not be rapid. On a prospective p/e ratio of 14.4, the shares are up with events.

Mathew, the precious metals group, Olympic Dam would have given Minorco a mini worldwide empire.

Mining is a money-hungry industry, and cash-rich groups are rare. Western Mining could yet invite Minorco to take a slice of Olympic Dam's equity. When the knock comes, a deal will be on Minorco's terms.

Minorco

Minorco must be feeling miffed that 49 per cent of the Olympic Dam copper-gold-uranium mine in Australia, for which it made a \$456 million cash offer to BP last November, has been snatched from under its nose.

With \$1.6 billion cash in hand and with the group's new management determined to show it can acquire operating assets, Minorco saw Olympic Dam as an ideal asset. It would have given Minorco a direct interest in Australia, as opposed to indirect investments. On the heels of December's copper deal in Chile, and last month's acquisition of a 10 per cent stake in Johnson

look fully valued.

General Accident's figures confirm the long-awaited upswing in the insurance industry, investors should not expect too much from the group too soon. Despite yesterday's £110 million preference share placing, General Accident's solvency margin is still only 46 per cent, which could restrict premium growth. The group will struggle to cover its dividend this year, so fears of a rights issue are likely to persist. The shares are trading on a 15 per cent premium to net assets, which makes them

General Accident

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Hayes joins ship jumpers

FINDING a reliable stopgap measure to plug a seemingly steady drip of those resigning from Nomura in the wake of last autumn's cost-cutting clearance has proved elusive for the Japanese bank. Keith Hayes, 33, is the latest to jump ship, this week joining Merrill Lynch as a European automotive analyst. Since Nomura made 49 of its analysts and salesmen redundant last October, it has lost a further 12 to rival firms. Only two people have joined the firm in recent months. Hayes, a former senior economist at the UK Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, joined Nomura from Paribas Capital Markets just weeks before the redundancies hit. He left last month, on the same day Malcolm Rutherford, Nomura's head of sales, resigned to join Shearson Lehman, another American firm, as a salesman. Mark Nieman, a European specialist salesman, and Ricardo Barcelona, a Spanish analyst, also departed for SG Warburg as Christine Baker, an oil analyst, moved to James Capel.

Weeks on board

EVEN expanding American firms, it seems, are not immune to the odd resignation. Mark Weeks has left Morgan Stanley to join London Global Securities as the independent lending specialist's director of marketing and business development. Weeks, 30, who headed Morgan Stanley's equity stock loan business in London as a vice-president,

joins two other refugees from the big American brokers: Miles Hiard, formerly vice-president in charge of securities lending at Salomon Brothers, and John DiRocco, former head of Shearson Lehman's stock lending operation. Hiard and DiRocco started LGS in 1990. "Now we've got a formidable third leg," a spokesman said.

Sales away

OWEN Smyth, a former trainee priest who switched his allegiance from God to Mammon 12 years ago, when he became a stockbroker, has put his faith in a different firm. He is following Chris Theis, who left Smith New Court late last month to join Hoare Govett, to become Theis's number two on the small business sales team. Smyth, 37, is to be made a Freeman of the City of London next month, thanks to his Worshipful Company of Bowyers membership. Theis, who as a director and head of smaller companies, is

organising Hoare Govett's Smaller Companies Exhibition at the Barbican on May 20, meanwhile, has been blessed with a 10.9 per cent appreciation in the smaller companies sector since the beginning of January.

Out of the Blue

THE CHANCES of John Sculley, Apple chairman and long-time frontrunner to become the new head of IBM, have faded faster than the computer company's profits over the past two years. Speculation heightened that he was the man to replace John Akers at the helm of Big Blue when Sculley, who is based in California, bought a family home within easy commuting distance of IBM's headquarters in New York state. But industry sources say he is now quietly ruling himself out of a race that is down from 30 to a shortlist of six. Leading the pack is George Fisher, chief executive of Motorola, the chip maker; Louis Gerstner, chairman of RJR Nabisco, the food and tobacco firm; and Morton Meyerson, head of Perot Systems Corporation, which he helped build with Ross Perot, the independent US presidential candidate. Coming up on the rails is a former insider, Paul Stern, the ex-IBM executive, who now heads Northern Telecom. Whoever crosses the finishing line first when the decision is announced later this month faces some tough decisions: IBM has ended its generous redundancy programme and is poised to boost job losses to above the original 25,000.

MELINDA WITTSTOCK

Misleading talk on leasehold reform

From Mrs Joan South
Sir, Jonathan Prynn errs in his report (Leasehold Reform: Tory peers attack right-to-buy plans) on February 24 in stating that the government has said it is prepared to amend the Housing and Urban Development Bill to give different treatment to landlords who claim that their areas are of historic interest.

Summing up for the government following the debate on a series of such (subsequently withdrawn) amendments in the House of Commons on February 9 at the report stage of the bill, Sir George Young said: "The suggestion is that these areas can be effectively managed and will retain their architectural and historical merit only if the existing leasehold arrangements are left unchanged. That cuts right across our desire to keep exemption from leasehold enfranchisement to an absolute minimum and keeping them on the face of the Bill. It could drive a coach and horses through the Bill, giving the Secretary of State for National Heritage the power to exempt any properties he sees fit."

He went on to say that he did not accept that "as a general proposition, landlords are necessarily better at management or more likely to care for and preserve a historic

building than the leaseholder who lives in it" (Hansard, columns 900-1).

There has been much misleading talk on this matter. In the February 23 debate on the Second Reading of the bill in the House of Lords, the Earl of Lindsay attempted to compare Argyle Square (near St Pancras Station) disadvantageously with Victoria Square (near Buckingham Palace) in support of what he wished to put forward as the benefits of the leasehold system. Historically, of course, there has never been any comparison in the way of residential prestige between the area around Buckingham Palace and the area around St Pancras Station. Additionally, the example chosen is unfortunate in that Victoria Square is now largely a freehold area, a number of its houses having become eligible for enfranchisement under the Leasehold Reform Act, 1967 (as amended in 1974). It provides, in fact, a very good illustration of the effective working of the management schemes incorporated in the 1967 legislation and repeated in the bill at present before the House of Lords.

Yours faithfully,
JOAN SOUTH,
Leasehold Enfranchisement Association,
26 Upper Phillimore Gardens, W8 7HA.

Unequal treatment for NatWest and Unilever

From Mr Paul Belshaw
Sir, Does it not seem strange to readers that your main headline on February 9 at the report stage of the bill, Sir George Young said: "The suggestion is that these areas can be effectively managed and will retain their architectural and historical merit only if the existing leasehold arrangements are left unchanged. That cuts right across our desire to keep exemption from leasehold enfranchisement to an absolute minimum and keeping them on the face of the Bill. It could drive a coach and horses through the Bill, giving the Secretary of State for National Heritage the power to exempt any properties he sees fit."

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

[illegible]

FT-SE VOLUMES			
Abbey Natl 11,000	Coats Wly 1,200	Legal & Gen 1,800	Scott & New 1,000

[illegible]

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): FT 30 share: 2233.3 (+7.8)

Low Jones	3365.95 (+10.54)	Brussels:		FRSE	
EP Composite	443.44 (-1.43)	General	5979.75 (+0.29)	Three	Previous
Lylo:		Paris: CKA	527.96 (-1.89)	Three	Previous
Kicks Ayve	1684.25 (-15.35)	Zurich: SCA Gen	481.6 (-2.5)	Three	Previous
ong Kong:		London:		Three	Previous
ong Sent:	6344.22 (-54.50)	FT A All-Share	1403.41 (-0.07)	Three	Previous
sterdam:		FT 500	1541.45 (+0.77)	US TR	Previous
S Tendency	99.3 (-0.6)	FT Gold Mines	90.1 (-2.49)	US TR	Previous
dney AO	1645.0 (+5.7)	FT Fixed Interest	112.13 (-0.06)	Long	Previous
Frankfurt:		FT Govt Secs	96.94 (-0.12)	Japan	Previous
AX	1696.74 (-4.21)	Bargains	311.86	German	Previous
		SEAG Volume	573.00	Three	Previous
		USM (Dalsman)	130.96 (+0.47)	Euro S	Previous
				Italian	Previous

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS			
First Dealings	Last Dealings	Last Declaration	For Settlement
March 22	March 5	June 3	June 14

All options were taken out on 25/93: ASDA, Aveco, BM Group, Bridon, Castles, Grand, Harmanco, Kallan, McLeod Russell, Norex, Proteus, Taylor Woodrow.

S.A. Code: RTR Wm 33/94.

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES				
Period	Open	High	Low	Close

100	Mar 93	2883.0	2897.0	2870.0	2883.0
100	Jun 93	2904.5	2904.5	2904.5	2898.0
100	Mar 93	94.06	94.06	94.06	94.06
100	Jun 93	94.71	94.71	94.65	94.71
100	Mar 93	96.78	96.80	96.77	96.78
100	Jun 93	96.65	96.66	96.55	96.66
100	Mar 93	92.02	92.02	91.94	91.94
100	Jun 93	93.05	93.06	93.00	93.05
100	Mar 93	111.29	111.29	111.29	111.29
100	Jun 93	110.19	110.19	110.15	110.19
100	Mar 93	105.02	105.08	105.00	105.00
100	Jun 93	105.02	105.08	105.00	105.00
100	Mar 93	111.77	111.82	111.77	111.77
100	Jun 93	111.05	111.30	111.05	111.11
100	Mar 93	95.68	95.68	95.42	95.68
100	Jun 93	96.10	96.10	95.86	95.93
100	Mar 93	90.66	90.68	90.62	90.66
100	Jun 93	91.70	91.71	91.66	91.70
100	Mar 93	94.65	94.70	94.66	94.65
100	Jun 93	95.40	95.43	95.36	95.40
100	Mar 93	96.40	96.40	96.36	96.40
100	Jun 93	97.42	97.42	97.40	97.42

MONEY MARKETS

Exchange index compared with 1985 was up at 77.3

		Days (range 71.0-71.3).			
SPRING SPOT AND BOARD RATES					
	Mile Rates for March 2	Range	Chase	1 month	3 month
819	Amsterdam	2.6681-2.6940	2.6684-2.6718	3 ¹ / ₂ -4 ¹ / ₂	11 ¹ / ₂ -14 ¹ / ₂
561	Brussels	48.79-49.22	49.07-49.17	11-15dis	31-37dis
2219	Copenhagen	0.9030-0.1210	0.9090-0.1120	8-10 ¹ / ₂ dis	21 ¹ / ₂ -25 ¹ / ₂ dis
36330	Dublin	0.9810-1.0400	1.0134-1.0400	55-60	186-174dis
	Frankfurt	2.3698-2.3710	2.3711-2.3749	11-12	31-37dis
4	London	217.34-217.94	217.42-217.94	164-18dis	431-464dis
65	Milan	1.6800-1.7146	1.6800-1.7146	152-16dis	361-43dis
	Lisbon	2249.90-2276.50	2263.80-2272.70	21-25dis	
4319	Montreal	1.7972-1.8099	1.8060-1.8081	0.13-0.15pr	0.10-0.09pr
25986	New York	1.4396-1.4507	1.4506-1.4510	0.38-0.43	1.01-0.97pr
10	Osaka	10.6990-10.1210	10.6910-10.1040	10-12	31-37dis
1532	Paris	8.0380-8.0380	8.0690-8.0380	3 ¹ / ₂ -4 ¹ / ₂	11-12dis
01647	Stockholm	11.1270-11.1770	11.1540-11.1770	3 ¹ / ₂ -4 ¹ / ₂	9 ¹ / ₂ -10 ¹ / ₂ dis
4773	Tokyo	16.66-16.62	16.76-16.61	2 ¹ / ₂ -3 ¹ / ₂	7-8dis
4658	Zurich	2.2006-2.2035	2.2012-2.2047	4 ¹ / ₂ -5 ¹ / ₂ pr	14-15pr
561	Source: <i>Exel</i>			Premium + pr. Discount - dt.	
10774	Argentina peso	1.4441-1.4470			
2823					
9726					
14095					
14106					
	Argentina peso	1.4441-1.4470			
	Australia			1.4095-1.4106	

LIFE OPTIONS			
Calls	Puts	Calls	Puts

[illegible]

REPORT: Strong buying by a major tr

[illegible]

COMMODITIES

pull-over selling with traders walks trace a the program in London.	lower whilst the market waited for dire the US stock figures.
CRUDE OILS (Barrel FOB)	
Brent Physical	18.88
Brent 2 1/2% Apr	18.88
Sarat 15 day Apr	20.8
WT Tices Intercontinental Apr	20.8
WT Tices Intercontinental Apr	21.5
PRODUCTS (\$/Gallon)	
Spot CIF NW Europe (Gross deliv)	
Premium Gas. 15	Ric 192.1
Gas 2 1/2% Apr	192.1
Non EEC 1H Mar	177.2
Non EEC 1H Apr	177.2
Non EEC 1H Apr	175.1
3.5 Fuel Oil	73.6
Naphtha	174.1
PIPE STEELS	
GNT Ltd	
GAS OIL	
Mar	173.75-74.00 Jun 173.75
Apr	173.75-74.00 Jul 173.75
May	173.00-73.25 Aug 176.00
BRENT (56.00ppm)	
Mar	18.88 Jul 18.88
Apr	18.88-18.91 Aug 18.88
Jun	18.95 BID 19.00
UNLEADED GASOLINE	
Mar	196.50-96.00 Jul 196.50
Apr	196.50-96.00 Aug 196.50
BUFFEX	
GNI Ltd (\$/tppm)	
Mar 93	High: 1375 Low: 1360 C30
Apr 93	1340 1340 C30
May 93	1340 1340 C30
Jul 93	1195 1195 Index
Feb 208 Low	Open bid 2475 Index
LONDON METAL EXCHANGE	
Gold (\$/ounce)	
1470.50-1471.00	1492.50-1493.00
280.00-280.25	292.00-292.50
999.0-999.5	1001.0-1001.5
565.0-566.0	570.0-573.0

Brazil cruzeiro *	29306.8-29328.5	Bulgaria (Cont)	33.90-33.94
Cyprus pound	0.706-0.716	Canada	1.2485-1.2490
Finland marka	8.5645-8.6805	Denmark	6.28-6.29
Greece drachma	318.0-325.0	France	5.560-5.565
		Germany	1.641-1.642

and	Hong Kong dollar	1.11706-11.1708	Hong Kong	7.7332-7.7342
	Indonesian rupiah	0.0485-0.0486	Ireland	1.475-1.475
	Japanese yen	0.0094-0.0094	Italy	1.504-1.507.0
	Malaysian ringgit	3.7867-3.7916	Japan	117.65-117.70
-0.10	New Zealand dollar	2.7367-2.7418	Malaysia	2.6215-2.6230
-0.10	Saudi Arabia riyal	5.344-5.34705	Netherlands	1.2545-1.2555
-0.10	Swiss franc	1.715-1.7157	Norway	6.97-6.98
-0.10	3 Africa rand (fin)	5.5494-5.5495	Portugal	150-150.3
-0.10	3 Africa rand (com)	4.9564-4.9627	Sweden	1.0425-1.0435
	7 A.T.A. dollar	5.55-5.5537	Spain	117.91-118.1
	Barreque Bank GTS = Ligeia Bank		Switzerland	1.5195-1.5203

MONEY RATES						
Discount Banks Clearing Banks 6 Finance Hour 7% Base Rates Market London O'right night 1% Low 5% Weak fixed: 6 Treasury Bills (Days): 2 mth 5% ; 3 mth 5% ; 6 mth 2 mth 5% ; 3 mth: 5%						
Prime Bank Bills (Days)	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth	
Sterling Money Rates	6% ⁶	6% ⁶	6% ⁶	5% ⁵ -5% ⁵	5% ⁵ -5% ⁵	
Interbank:	6% ⁶	6% ⁶	6% ⁶	5% ⁵ -5% ⁵	5% ⁵ -5% ⁵	
Overnight open 5% close 6%						
Local Authority Depo:	6%	n/a	5%	5%		
Sterling Cds	3.09-3.04	n/a	3.11-3.06	3.10-3.13	3.40-3.35	
Dollarizing Sydney Cds:						

ECGD: Fixed Rate Sterling Export Finance. Make-up day Feb 26, 1993 Agreed rates
 Mar 24, 1993 to Apr 25, 1993 Scheme 1: 7.35%. Scheme II & III: 7.47%. Reference rate
 Jan 30, 1993 to Feb 26, 1993. Scheme IV & V: 6.228%.

MONEY DEPOSITS 1% 12 MONTH					
Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Dollar	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³
French Franc:	11% ¹¹	11% ¹¹	11% ¹¹	10% ¹⁰	8% ⁸
French Franc:	11% ¹¹	11% ¹¹	11% ¹¹	10% ¹⁰	8% ⁸
Swiss Franc:	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³
Yen:	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³	3% ³

GOLD AND PRECIOUS METALS (BANK & CO)			
Bullion: Open \$328.20-328.60	Close: \$329.20-329.60	High: \$330.20-330.70	Low: \$327.20-327.60
Gold: \$328.20-328.60	Gold: \$329.20-329.60	Gold: \$330.20-330.70	Gold: \$327.20-327.60
Silver: \$578.00-578.40	Silver: \$579.00-579.40	Silver: \$580.00-580.40	Silver: \$577.00-577.40

governing activity practices.

100% 90% 80% 70% 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0%

Silver: \$3.25 (\$2.475) **Palladium:** \$105.60 (\$73.20)

SMALL BUSINESSES

Capital opportunities for little firms

All over the country, efforts are being made to solve the long-running problem of funding. Derek Harris reports

If economic upturn is around the corner — which is the message from an increasing number of indicators — finding extra capital will soon become a key pre-occupation of small firms. Extra financial strength will be needed to fund new attacks on expanding markets or to add production capacity to meet a surge in orders.

The point is underlined in a Midland Bank study on the changing needs of smaller companies. The survey says: "The end of the recession will bring some relief to the corporate market but recovery will be hindered by high levels of indebtedness, poor profitability and a need for higher levels of capital investment."

The lack of finance has been a sore point for a long time with the small business community, whose needs are met mostly by cash injections of £100,000 or less. Baroness Denton, the small firms minister at the trade and industry department, says that dealing with the problem is one of her top priorities.

The government is due shortly to announce that training and enterprise councils will start 15 "one-stop shops" to advise and counsel small businesses. If the scheme is successful 200 such shops are eventually planned. Finding more ways to cope with financing demands becomes increasingly urgent as evidence of an economic upturn grows. This is causing speculation that Norman Lamont, the Chan-

cellor, will, in his Budget, introduce a scheme to raise investment cash for smaller businesses. This would be a replacement for the Business Expansion Scheme (BES), which is due to end later this year.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has been pressing for a new scheme to help to alleviate the cash flow and investment problems of

small businesses. Brian Pearce, the chief executive of Midland Bank, last month called for a manufacturing support scheme on these lines. The problem with BES has been that investors largely became involved with property-based ventures, especially those involving repossessed homes.

The BES has nevertheless shown how a worthy successor could still pave a useful way for small firms to expand. An example is the wine-bar business of Sally Greenwood in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, (see article on right). Seventy shareholders — mostly local people, including lawyers, accountants and bankers — raised £100,000 in a BES scheme to underpin the business.

Mr Pearce supports those who have called for a statutory right to interest on late payment of business debts, as is common practice elsewhere in Europe. Because of the cash-flow problems it causes, especially to smaller businesses.

Lady Denton is supporting efforts by the CBI and others to tackle the problem voluntarily. She has also pressed government departments to show a good example.

Optimism about economic upturn emerged in two recent Small Business Research Trust surveys, one carried out for National Westminster Bank and the other for Lloyds Bank. In the NatWest survey, the trust noted signs that the recession might be lifting for small manufacturers, whole-

sale and business services. Those depending directly on consumer demand, such as in retailing, catering, the restaurant trade and small hauliers, were still having a difficult time.

Even so, this is a turnaround from the previous quarter, which had continued to show deterioration. The survey comments: "There has been a widespread improvement in



Cheers for investors: the financial cornerstone of Sally Greenwood's successful wine-bar business in Milton Keynes was formed a year ago by 70 people who raised £100,000

expectations for the first quarter of this year."

The Lloyds survey excludes construction and other sectors hard hit by recession. Yet more than half the firms in this survey, mainly in manufacturing, retail, distribution and business services, reported increased sales last year. Nearly a half said they had grown stronger in the recession and expected higher sales this year.

Another recent survey that found small and medium-sized independent companies "significantly more confident" about business prospects was carried out by 3i, the venture capital company.

Cash to fuel this predicted small business recovery is unlikely to come in any quantity from the normal run of venture-capital providers. The modest sums needed are well below the floor — of £250,000 or so — at which it is economic for venture capital investors to take on a company.

This is despite the fact that there can be exceptions, particularly with 3i, which has always made a point of looking at some smaller fry. Nationalised industries, including British Rail and British Coal, have schemes aimed at producing jobs through helping small businesses.

A newcomer to the ranks of those injecting small business aid in disadvantaged areas is BT. Its FutureStart scheme, operated by the Top Technol-

ogy venture capital company, invests usually between £50,000 and £100,000.

FutureStart, which has initial funding of £3 million, does not discourage the formation of small businesses operating in its own telecommunications sector and aims mainly to help those in economically deprived inner city areas.

Other locations are not excluded and some rural areas with serious economic difficulties have been identified. The first half dozen inner city deals are now being processed. They cover a range of clients from a lighting manufacturer in the West Midlands to a steel-bars producer in Northern Ireland.

Since early in 1991, British Gas has been operating a £15 million venture capital fund targeting mainly smaller businesses of strategic interest to the oil and gas industry.

These strands of help are fragile compared with the sheer scale of overall small business needs. More than 1.7 million small firms are registered for value added tax. The actual total must be higher because many are not registered for VAT.

In 1991, the latest year analysed, there was still a net gain of 3,000 in the small business population, after allowing for those that had disappeared. In normal times, small businesses have had to rely largely on the street banks for financial support. This is now harder to obtain because the banks, beset with their own financial problems, have put the squeeze on the small business sector.

Lady Denton, for one, believes that banks should be more caring of their small business customers while also meeting responsibilities to their own shareholders.

She sees no reason why there should not be a detailed agreement over what a bank will do and charge over a

period of time so that a small-business customer may plan more clearly. She says: "The trouble is that small businesses have so little room for manoeuvre to make mistakes. Why not agree costs with a bank for six months? That would allow a small business to concentrate on its own development instead of being constantly faced with looking to survive rather than the stage further on, to secure growth."

Lady Denton, who bemoans the suggested phasing-out of the unlisted securities market (USM) as a ready means for small companies to secure cash from share flotations, looks to the tapping of other sources of finance. She is now concentrating on the regions as a possibly substantial well-spring of development capital.

Some regions are more active than others. Several localised funds operate in Yorkshire and Humberside. For example, the Midland Enterprise Fund for Yorkshire and Humberside, has the Midland Bank as lead investor and works to a ceiling of £100,000, thus targeting those small businesses most starved of venture capital.

There is the Yorkshire Enterprise venture capital fund, operating in the £100,000 to £250,000 investment range. Yorkshire Enterprise also manages the small-ticket Midland fund, and Peter Claydon, Yorkshire Enterprise's commercial director, says that it tackles the assessment cost problem inherent in a small deal by being "lean and mean".

"We have to take a very rapid and very structured perspective of these companies," he adds. Lady Denton, herself a Yorkshirewoman and a former business executive, has been discussing with the Yorkshire funds the best approach to increase the amount of investment cash available at regional level.

From small sandwiches great wine bars grow

Sally Greenwood learnt from her theatrical family background about using personality in operating a business that deals with the public as customers.

Involvement in motor racing taught her about sponsorship and the importance of getting right the presentation details — from stationery to uniforms — to give a business the right, crisp image.

A catering course added to her experience and, in 1982, she went into business in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, selling sandwiches made in her own kitchen. They were sold from the back of a delivery car driven around offices in nearby Northampton and then, as the business prospered, in Milton Keynes.

Mrs Greenwood, until then primarily a housewife, says: "I had just been divorced and found myself on my own without a job and with no formal qualifications — but with three children. I don't think I fully realised I was running a business — I just did it. I made every mistake in the book." Now, she is chairing Milton Keynes Women in Enterprise.

Her business, called the Lunch Bunch, built up by

1986 to annual sales of £50,000, with profits in her pocket of about £10,000. Five years later the firm, then operating from a small factory, was turning over £250,000 a year. She entered a business competition run by Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire Training and Enterprise Council.

Despite the fact that she did not win the top prize, the local office of KPMG Peat Marwick, the accountants and consultants, conducted a day's appraisal of her business. She recalls: "One of the partners telephoned to ask whether I would be interested in running a wine bar."

The

consultants had identified what proved to be an opportunity to provide a meeting and lunching place for business people from offices in Milton Keynes.

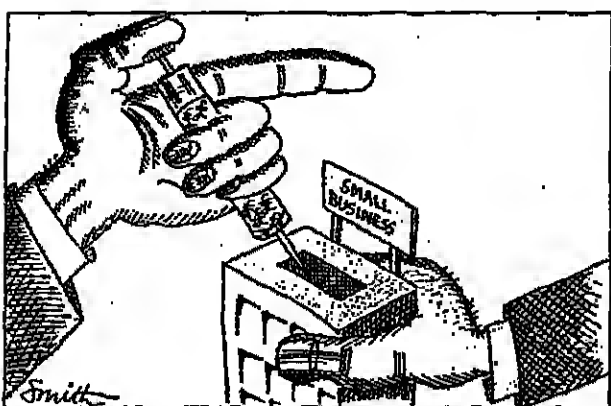
Nearly £200,000 was needed to start the business. Seventy shareholders put up more than £100,000, using the tax relief of a business expansion scheme (BES). Charles Wells, the Bedford brewer lent another £80,000.

Best Cellars opened on April Fools' day last year and is already profitable. She runs the business from up front; a chef looks after the kitchens. The sandwiches and buffet lunches operation is run by a manager.

Mrs Greenwood is the only executive director on the board and its chairman is Michael MacDougall, a local stockbroker. Colin Ofor, the managing director of Milton Keynes Business Venture, the local enterprise agency, is also on the board.

A natural expansion for Best Cellars could be into Northampton, Bedford or St Albans, but Mrs Greenwood says: "That's for thinking about next year."

DEREK HARRIS



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BT gives early stage businesses a chance.

At BT, we're happy to do what we can to help this country's small entrepreneurs. That's why we're now funding FutureStart, a community venture fund that's designed to help early stage business in the UK's less prosperous areas. It's another example of our ongoing community programme, a programme that's been designed to help communities to help themselves. Any enquiries relating to FutureStart should be sent to: Harry Fitzgibbons, Managing Director, Top Technology Limited, 20-21 Tookes Court, Cursitor Street, London EC4A 3LB. Tel: 071-242 9900.



In the community

Angels watch over new entrepreneurs

Baroness Denton, the small firms minister, sees a constructive role for "business angels". These are usually entrepreneurs who have made a success of one business and sold it, which frees them to inject cash and expertise into small firms.

Derek Harris writes. One organisation that for several years has been operating a "marriage bureau" network to bring "angels" and young businesses together is LINC. London-based, it works through a dozen local enterprise agencies, including the London Enterprise Agency (LEntA), from which it first emerged. Last year, LINC was involved in 23 "marriages"

worth a total of £1.15 million. This was more than double the number of deals in the previous year.

More recently, five training and enterprise councils (Tecs) have been designated to develop the "angels" concept. One, South and East Cheshire Tec, has created an investment unit, which is working within the LINC network.

Other Tec cover Devon and Cornwall, Bedfordshire, East Lancashire, Kirkcaldy and Calderdale in the north of England. Separately, the North London Tec has been involved with Barfield (Barnet and Enfield) Enterprise Agency in working with LINC since the middle of last year.

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Tenacity and commitment are important factors for firms that ride out the ups and downs of economic life, Derek Harris reports

Blind faith in a way out of recession

When Duncan Whitehouse, a chartered engineer and industrial manager, set up Alpha Blind Cleaning Services in 1984, he thought he was entering a niche market.

The theory was that blinds have a firm place in modern office buildings with their vast expanses of glass in windows and walls. Blinds control light, which has a particular importance in offices since sunshine can make visual display units difficult to read. Blinds also fulfil a design role as interior decoration. And, according to the theory, these fittings would need regular cleaning and refurbishment.

In the commercial property boom Alpha used ultrasonic cleaning methods to deal with

the wide variety of blinds in offices, including plastic venetian blinds and those in other materials ranging from fibre-glass and acrylics to polyester and cotton.

Alpha was one of about half a dozen companies entirely specialising in blinds cleaning and, within four years, Alpha took over a maker of blinds and curtains in Basildon, Essex. Alpha, based at Epping, Essex, reckons that at least three quarters of the blinds market has been in the South East although the company also operates in other parts of the country.

Then recession brought problems. As construction of new offices tailed off, the blinds manufacture sector shrank accordingly. Companies running into financial

problems could always put off having their blinds cleaned, at least for a while.

There have been countervailing influences. Some companies, which might otherwise have fully refurbished their offices, including putting in new fittings, settled instead for thorough cleaning. Alpha noticed that its cleaning activities, although down, were not as affected as new sales.

Some blinds cleaners went to the wall but Alpha was among those that pursued new business tenaciously. Mr Whitehouse says: "We still have had to retrench. Three-and-a-half years ago we had two factories but one has since been closed. We had 38 employees; now there are 26."

Prices in the market place have barely changed in the



Clean slats: Duncan Whitehouse, still in the business of making and cleaning blinds, despite the continued impact of the recession

past couple of years. Alpha's answer was to pursue increased efficiency. It secured the quality certification of BS5750 in September 1991.

More than a third of Alpha's business comes from some 50 trade customers in facilities management and the property servicing sector. They

turn to Alpha for its specialist skills. Mr Whitehouse says: "For vertical blinds the market is still growing. If you are up with fashion there are sales gains to be made."

Some fashions are short-lived. The concertina-like pleated blind never really caught on because it proved unpopular

in use. Most people want at least a glimpse of the view from a window. The pleated blocked them out.

Some blinds cleaning contracts are substantial. One prominent London banking headquarters gave Alpha six months' work in 1987, cleaning all the blinds on every

floor. Four years later, the job is being repeated on a slightly more staggered basis.

Mr Whitehouse says that the lifespan of most blinds is probably about 20 years. Cleaning is needed between four and five times during that period. Grime left too long can become irretrievably "burned"

into a blind's finish. Rails on which blinds operate eventually wear to the point at which they become the main determinant of the lifetime of a blinds system, he adds.

Fortunately, Mr Whitehouse foresees no forceful competition arising for blinds in offices.

Banks seek a new role in financing firms

Caution is the watchword as the terms for new lending change

History never repeats itself, exactly, Jane Bradford contends. The head of small business services at NatWest Bank believes that lessons are learnt and that at least some of the mistakes of the past are avoided next time round.

She says: "There is a sizeable minority of businesses seeing greater employment prospects. There are all types of interesting situations. A lot of businesses have plans to expand, but have been holding fire until the economy picks up. Others want to grow bigger but are not prepared to do it on borrowed money."

"There will be more investment although it will be at a slower pace and businesses will try to cover it from cash flow. There is a clear indication that managers are wary of getting overborrowed."

"Among new businesses, only 20-25 per cent are likely to borrow from the bank from day one. Four or five years ago that figure was about 50 per cent." NatWest research shows that people who have lost their jobs are still turning to self-employment.

The number of people who cite redundancy as the main reason for starting their own businesses has risen by 10 per cent in the past 18 months and is now the main driving force of one in five would-be entrepreneurs. Yet this is not quite the experience of the early 1980s being repeated. Nearly half those citing redundancy live in the South and another 29 per cent in Wales. The Midlands and the North, which took the brunt ten years ago, are not so well represented this time.

Mrs Bradford says: "The key difference between this recession and that of the early 1980s is that not only do the new proprietors have the experience of their predecessors to draw on but they have more training, managerial skills and first-hand experience of the same line of work from their previous employment."

More start-ups are in the services sector than previously. Those made redundant in this sector "have accumulated more assets and business skills and it does mean they have more cash to invest in a potential business."

These are the people who realise how fast redundancy money can be frittered away on an expensive holiday and a new car. They are less likely to wait until most of the money has gone before trying to start afresh.

Mrs Bradford says: "Many have learnt the lesson from the past failures of others that starting up a business carries a risk. There is a much greater awareness of that. In the early 1980s people saw managing their own business as a licence to print money. They knew someone who had started by

himself, his house doubled in value, his children were in private school.

"Today's entrepreneurs have seen a neighbour, relative or friend get into difficulties. If they overstretch themselves they know what it means. They have seen houses repossessed and telephones cut off. They know the embarrassment that failure brings.

At the end of the day, people learn from what they see around them."

Despite the pains of the past that, she says, have left scars on all the parties involved, Mrs Bradford believes that banks will continue to find a leading role in financing small businesses.

"Lending is our lifeblood," she says. "And businesses that have started up in a recession are a different breed. Bankers and managers know that it is no good brushing aside questions on what happens if things go wrong."

She thinks both sides are likely to look for medium-term lending at fixed interest rates rather than through overdrafts where interest rates can vary and loans can be called in at short notice.

She says: "With fixed loans both the bank and the customer know exactly what they are taking on. We already have these arrangements for personal loans so why not for businesses? At the time you take the loan you know exactly what you are going to pay each month and the bank cannot unilaterally change the rules. I believe that more bank managers and small business advisers will insist on fixed terms and be prepared to refuse a loan if they cannot judge how well the business is going."

Mrs Bradford says that an unfortunate relationship with a bank is not the prime reason why small businesses get into trouble. "The overwhelming problem is lack of sales. Their problem with the bank stems from the fact that they are not generating enough business to pay banking charges, even if the charges were lower. The second problem is cash flow. Many businesses generating sales have difficulty in getting their money because debtors are slow to pay."

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How can the press win back the young?

When Britain's leading media research journal, *Admap*, calls a conference "The Press Fights Back", the press clearly has ground for concern. This is indeed the case. Newspaper circulations and advertising revenue have been falling steeply for several years, and the senior executives at the conference wanted to know why and what could be done to reverse the trend.

Unfortunately, conferences rarely produce coherent guidelines, and this was no exception. There were three mutually contradictory lines of argument, which led to differing views of the situation and of how the press could best fight its way out.

One group of speakers argued that the present difficulties faced by the press, although worrying, were not exceptional, still less terminal. When the good times returned, everything would carry on more or less as before.

A second group was more apocalyptic. The world is changing, apparently in ways inimical to the written word. The growing attractions of electronic media, from television to computer games, are gradually but surely seducing the young from the press, and only changes on a heroic scale can stop the decline of the newspaper industry.

The third and most numerous group denied or ignored the possibility that anything was seriously wrong, at least with the medium they represented, and instead settled down to explaining how and why they were doing so well.

The leading representatives of the first strand of argument were Professor Harry Henry, the chairman of the Advertising Association's statistics committee, and Alan Cuppage, of Carat Research, who looked at long-term trends in press circulation and in advertising revenue. They presented a picture of a generally successful industry going through a temporary and not very unusual bad patch.

Professor Henry said that between 1962 and 1992 the cover price of newspapers (adjusted for inflation) had risen by 126 per cent for national

VIEWPOINT Newspapers are puzzling about their falling readerships

dailies and 157 per cent for Sundays, while circulations had fallen relatively little. The result was that in real terms the public was spending twice as much on dailies and 60 per cent more on Sundays than in 1962, hardly an indication of a dying business.

Mr Cuppage similarly argued that newspapers had held on fairly well to their share of a rapidly growing advertising cake. The recession, however, meant that real revenue had fallen. Advertising levels had shown that the press



Chris Davis: scepticism

was not slump-proof, but there was no reason to believe it was disaster-prone, either.

The second group, which included Chris Davis, the assistant editor of *The Sun*, showed rather more scepticism about the idea that the press in its present form had no long-term worries.

I believe that the heavy loss of readership in the younger age groups over the past five years, particularly for national dailies, should cause concern. The problem is greater because figures for television viewing generally and ITV in particular have shown the opposite tendency: viewing

hours for ITV among the 16-34 age group are up by 11 per cent on 1987.

The plight of the dailies stands out even more starkly when contrasted with women's weekly magazines, where new titles have boosted readership among the 25-34 group by almost 40 per cent.

I am uncertain whether the weaknesses of dailies in attracting the young is bound to continue, but Mr Davis has no doubts. He believes that the triumph of electronics is inevitable, and that instead of trying to fight it, the press should join in by moving to personalised electronic newspapers, printed according to the interests of the consumer on his or her own personal computer.

Among those whose basic message was "Haven't we done well?", the most illuminating was Mike Newman, of Associated Newspapers, the chairman of the Newspaper Publishers' Association circulation executive. This was partly because what he had to say was not well known, but also because he could point to advances in his area since the Wapping revolution broke the power of trade unions to stifle efficient production and distribution techniques.

Over the past few years, national newspapers have not only become better products, but their method of distribution has also changed and improved, for the first time allowing newspaper managers to understand and control the distribution of their product. This area is now under investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission because the basis of the gains has been the rationalisation of distributors and the refusal to deal with those too small to be economic.

Given the ineluctable record of the MMC, there is every prospect that one of the most valuable ways in which newspapers can adapt to a more competitive world will soon be denied to them, not because of government hatred of the press but because of plain old-fashioned bureaucratic stupidity.

HAROLD LIND

The light heavyweight

The new controller of BBC1 must find a way to entertain the intellectuals, Robin Hunt says

Even before John Birt joined the BBC's PAYE scheme it was clear there had been huge changes at the corporation. However, it is not the internal revolution that makes Alan Yentob's new role as BBC1 Controller any easier, but how the BBC is seen externally.

For years, the BBC has been looking for a way to get off the hook of falling ratings. Now it has re-established itself as the public service broadcaster, confident enough to admit in its recent policy document, *Extending Choice*, that in an era of fragmentation it was bound to suffer in ratings and would respond with quality.

So where does that leave Mr Yentob? It is said that he is not the man for the masses: that he is a metropolitan elitist. Yet take the case of the two "operas". Last month he cleared a Saturday night BBC2 schedule at four days' notice, to bring Verdi's *Stiffelio* live from Covent Garden. He later delivered one of BBC2's highest ratings with Oprah Winfrey's Michael Jackson interview, bought for far less than the *Eldorado* swimwear allowance. If this is elitism, it is at least astute.

Mr Yentob's main worries are in light entertainment and drama: what to do with old stalwarts such as Esther Rantzen and Terry Wogan, how to resolve the *Eldorado* farce and how to find new talent. It is unsurprising that both Mark Shivas at drama and Jim Moir at entertainment are thought to be under threat. Mr Yentob has a reputation for surrounding himself with his own people.

Mr Yentob knows that it can take two or three years for programmes such as *Casualty* and *One Foot in the Grave* to catch on with the so-called chattering classes, whose influence is still important in the run-up to charter renewal in 1996. He also knows how quickly a failure can be rejected by the same people. These are the audiences who can decide that, say, Noel Edmonds, whose *House Party* gives BBC1 such a strong Saturday night start, is suddenly, after years of snobish dismissal, a stronger performer than Bruce Forsyth.

Eldorado will bring Mr Yentob's first big scheduling decision on BBC1. Were it to be axed, he would have a gaping hole in his weekday schedule



Star turns Michael Jackson and Oprah Winfrey; inset, Alan Yentob

on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Despite the much-touted breaking-up of BBC1's Saturday night hit, *Casualty*, into a twice-weekly drama series, the likelihood of a replacement soap is remote. Given that *Eldorado* itself replaced an ailing chat show, what can Mr Yentob offer?

He does not begin with a clean slate but has to confront a viewing week full of immovable ratings Himalayas such as *Coronation Street*, *The Bill* and the BBC's own *EastEnders*, together with the no-less-fixed BBC news bulletins at 6pm and 9pm.

Pamela Reiss, a broadcasting research consultant, believes that one answer could be hour-long family dramas broadcast on weekdays from 7pm to 8pm. The advantage of such scheduling would be to put pressure on *Coronation Street*, which starts half an hour later on ITV. But quality drama comes in at £200,000 an hour so the costs of such a risky enterprise and the smaller audiences at 7pm make this unlikely.

Another idea, since the tremendous success of Central's *Inspector Morse*, is the two-hour drama, a product of the freedom of the ITV peak-time schedule. *Inspector Morse* was shown on Wednesday evenings after *Coronation Street*, and kept much of the soap's

popularity, to stay on BBC2. Mr Yentob is left with the old core: Noel Edmonds, Bruce Forsyth, Michael Barrymore and Des O'Connor.

The reality is that the old-fashioned variety show no longer works, and is difficult to reinvent. Perhaps it is significant that Mr Yentob's *Bala* award winner, *Have I Got News for You?*, was the only BBC programme that the new director general praised as innovative, quality entertainment. And even here it would be almost impossible to schedule the programme on BBC1 before 10pm without dissipating its wit.

Many talk of new "people" shows, but these must be nurtured over years, not months. Ms Reiss suggests *Hellolstyle* programmes on the rich and famous, and everyone wonders about the future of the game show. Mr Yentob's only contribution, BBC's *Ps & Qs*, does not look like the future.

Mr Yentob must expect short-term disappointments, but having been at the BBC since 1968 he has seen most things before. He starts his job with many people on his side: Jonathan Powell, now director of drama at Carlton, who bore the brunt of criticism over BBC1's ratings performance over the past few years, says: "Alan will do really well. It will be difficult but he is the right person at the right time."

For your eyes only

In future, customised papers may offer only the news you wish to read

Some time after the turn of the century, the newspaper boy may have disappeared. Robin Hunt writes. Gone too may be the articulated lorries cranking through the night, packed high with the next day's newspapers. The newspaper, many predict, may be dead: long live the newspaper.

I imagine a constantly updated, personalised newspaper which contains, for example, *The Times's* features, *The Guardian's* news, *The Daily Telegraph's* news, *Vogue's* fashion tips and *Nigel Dempster's* gossip, printed out from a machine sitting beneath the television any time day or night.

The catalyst for change, according to Walter Bender, the principal research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), will come from the entertainment industry. The key is digitisation, a new technology which makes the expensive computerised systems which now produce national newspapers seem as outdated as Gutenberg's press.

Digitisation is a form of compression allowing more information to be sent across present and future communications systems. With digitisation, the channels available to say, BSkyB will be multiplied by ten. This will have a tremendous impact on technologies such as pay-for-view television. Audiences need no longer be tied to specific times: broadcasters could, for instance, show one film on 50 channels, each starting five minutes after the last.

Digitisation also means being able to send eight copies

of *The Times* down a line in a minute, so if a household possessed a sophisticated TV linked to a laser printer, it could receive its daily paper in the living room. "It will come much later than I think it will," Mr Bender says, "and much sooner than you think." Distribution is the key. "The barriers to entry are very low."

The trends in media consumption have long suggested that the future does not look bright for the product of pulp and ink. The catalyst for change, according to Walter Bender, the principal research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), will come from the entertainment industry. The key is digitisation, a new technology which makes the expensive computerised systems which now produce national newspapers seem as outdated as Gutenberg's press.

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move into broadcasting. Up to a point, Lord Copper. A recent Newspaper Society conference held many hopeful ideas for publishers. Pride of place went to a presentation by Mr Bender, who believes that papers have to play to their strengths: the closest of their relationship with readers.

Currently, advertisers are able to use postcodes to target areas with particular kinds of readers. Such geographical targeting, however, is "a dead

end" of a photographic magazine featuring a review of three new cameras alongside a review of the reader's own camera (using information gleaned from the records of his or her purchases).

"In this way the magazine is far more personal and the advertiser benefits because it is far more directed marketing. This is win, win, win."

This idea is taken further with *Bender's Bugle*, a daily newspaper produced from the constantly updated database of news and information at MIT. It includes news from the *Boston Globe*, any items printed that day about bicycles, information about the place Mr Bender may be visiting. If he is in Birmingham, for example, his paper will tell him if there is a classical concert that night, and what the weather is likely to be. In fact his paper will give him just what he has asked for.

It sounds like both a private heaven and a social hell. I targeted rather than a public news source, but Mr Bender says: "It doesn't leave you in a vacuum, this is a dynamic, not a static thing. The personal newspaper would be one news source among many. Imagine how much more up-to-date a newspaper would be if editors did not have to worry about getting editions off the presses at 6pm. Instead, journalists could work through the night, constantly updating the paper, with the results of their labours accessible day or night."

The same idea is likely to shape advertising, with classified advertising the most obvious first route. An MIT is also studying means of having a newspaper read by machines so that consumers could listen to a tape on the drive to work, jarring the joints. I thought we had reached the depths of idiocy when I heard the football results berabath a cha-cha beat. But now the previously sober and reliable *Financial World* might give its stock market report over disco music.

Have we fallen so far in the broadcasting media that even money is no longer sacred? I wish the producers would turn it off and stop trying to create all human life in the image of the pip video.

PETER MULLEN



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N for Ten

THEATRE page 34

The trauma of an abused child provides a harrowing monologue for Kelly Hunter

OPERA: Rodney Milnes declares that the era of the fashionably updated production is coming to an end

Last exit for trendy concepts

There is a vague feeling in the air that the age of the "concept" opera production is coming to an end. It emanates as much from within the trade as outside it, more from practitioners themselves than from audiences, who have always had an equivocal attitude towards it.

At both Welsh and English National Operas, breeding grounds of the concept production as my checklist (right) suggests, there are changes afoot. At the Coliseum there is a near-Götterdämmerung atmosphere, as the current management prepares to bow out this summer, while the new general director of WNO is a famous singer's man. Add to that a huff and a puff from non-conceptualising producer Elijah Moshinsky, whose squib entitled "A pox on post-modernism", published in *Opera* magazine, caused only a tiny fuss, and it starts to seem as if the whole edifice is crumbling.

Germans did nowadays instead of invading Poland, and, after two singularly depressing stagings of *Fidelio*, Jonathan Miller's remark that they had a nerve coming over here to lecture us about freedom. Two chauvinist, indefensible and delicious observations. Memories of that particular invasion have been purged by Peter Stein's superb, stimulating and defiantly non-conceptual work for WNO.

But it released a head of energy in this country. Out — heedlessly, unfairly — went fuddy-duddy, traditional names like Blatchley, Colin Graham, John Copley and Anthony Besch, who had done so much to raise the profile of opera production in the Sixties and Seventies. In came a younger generation — David Pountney of course (replacing Graham at the Coliseum in 1982) and, from West as opposed to East, the American David Alden, whose first production here, *Wozzeck* (Scottish Opera, 1980), was nevertheless authentically Brechtian in concept.

'Audiences knew what to expect: trenchcoats, mayhem'

The Norwest Holst sponsorship of three one-off economy productions at ENO provided further stimulus: *Rienzi* and *Mazeppa* were unforgettable in their various ways, and the third, Keith Warner's *Mosé*, failed not so much because of its business suits, Kalashnikovs and un-Russian political gestures, but because only one member of the cast came within a mile of being able to sing it.

Not everything was hand grenades and white-faced grimace. Miller's *Rigoletto* worked because the Mafia-updating fulfilled virtually all the requirements of Verdi's dramaturgy: a Mediterranean-Catholic community, a sickly regard for virginity and an absolute ruler with power of life and death. It was so entrancing visually — Hopper crossed with *West Side Story* — that it took three or four viewings to notice that the "Dook" behaved exactly as you would expect him to, whereas Verdi's François I/Duke of Mantua was a Christian ruler from whom rather more was expected.

The sense of liberal outrage was sacrificed. But it worked, which Miller's follow-up, a Mussolini-era *Tosca*, didn't. Miller seized upon the one thing in the opera that isn't important, the political background, and made it the centre of

his concept, and in piling on visual references lifted from Rossellini's masterpiece *Rome, Open City* only succeeded in making the opera look cheap and tawdry by comparison. The musicologist Joseph Kerman — he who famously described *Tosca* as a "shabby little shocker" — would have loved it.

Updating is a valuable occasional exercise. Less valuable is another strand of conceptual direction, one that has been isolated as the "c'est une idée" school. This originated from a baritone singing Mozart's Count Almaviva somewhere in France, and being told that at the end of his aria he would disappear precipitately down a trap. When he asked why, the director replied with a shrug, "c'est une idée".

It seems that the image, the moment, is all fine, but one man's image is another man's tedium. This school, still flourishing in France and the Low Countries, has made comparatively few inroads here. Pierre Audi's *Jerusalem* (Verdi) for Opera North was a notable example in 1990, and there were elements of it in Julia Hollander's *Fernando and Gerda* for ENO the same year (tea-chests and grand pianos), and in the recent WNO *Iphigénie en*

Tauride. When singers start moving in slow motion you know the ideas are running short. Ruth Berghaus's *Don Giovanni* could be grouped in this category, but her ideas have a sort of coherence to them. It is sad that so little of her work has been seen here.

Design is crucial to conceptualists. David Fielding (influenced by European art) and Stefanos Lazaridis (epic expressionism) are central figures. Working with Alden and Pountney, they have shaken audiences out of the torpor of expectation, and made anything seem preferable to the anodyne "international" stagings of a Pizzi or a Sanjust.

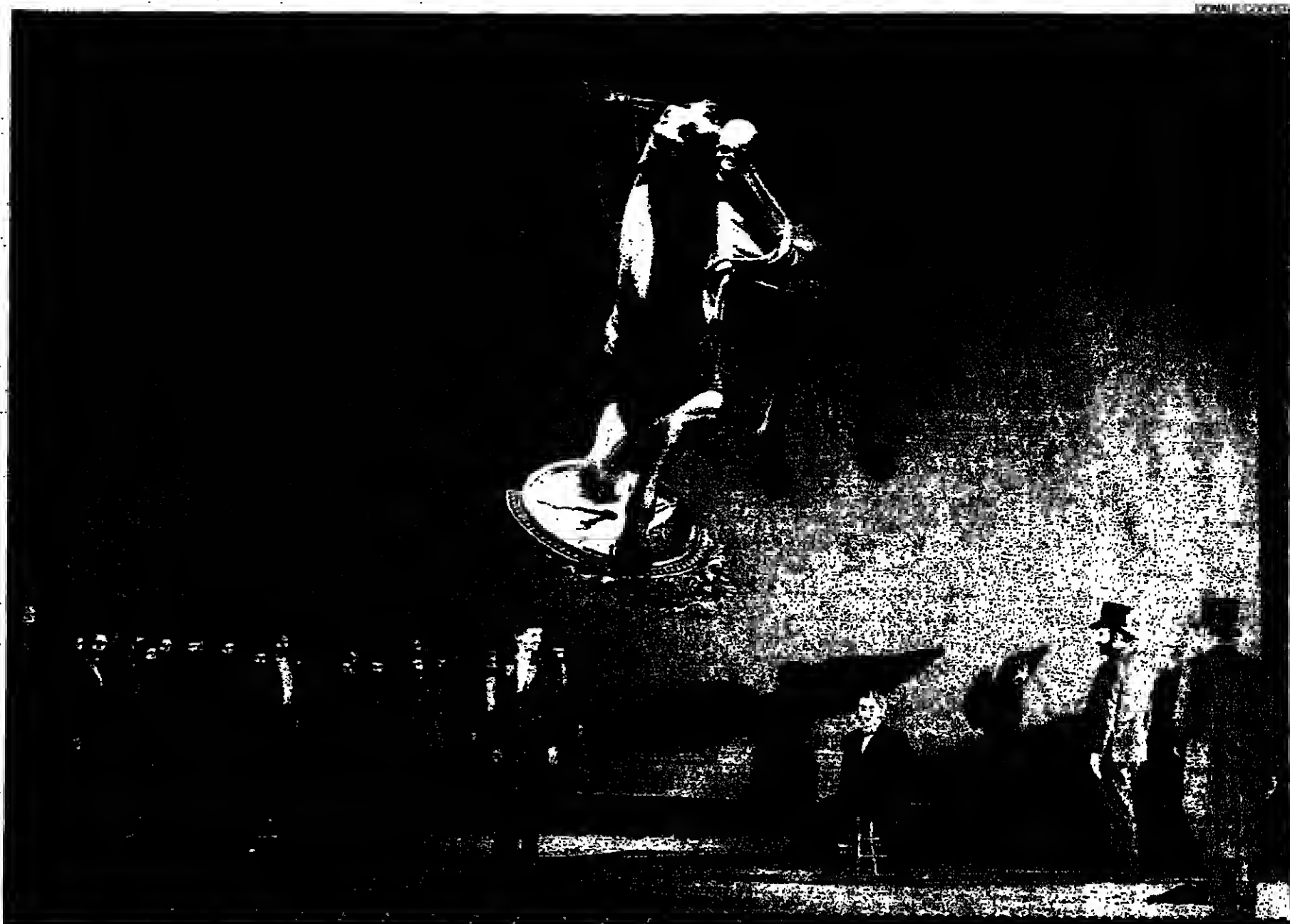
Or rather, they have until recently. A style as powerfully idiosyncratic as Alden-Fielding's can atrophy: the problem with their *Elektra* for WNO was that you could have foretold exactly what was going to happen down to the last grope, bare lightbulb, hypodermic and dry Martini. Significantly, Alden is using another designer for his forthcoming ENO *Andante*. Similarly the Pountney-Lazaridis *Mr Browck* was an in-joke catalogue of ENO conceptual clichés. Both suggested that an era was indeed coming to an end.

There were splendours in those

20 years, great productions one wanted to see again and again: *Rusalka*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Hansel and Gretel* (Pountney), Alden's *Masked Ball* and *Mazeppa* (don't quote me). They stimulated and enabled work from such new blood as Richard Jones (too unpredictable to fit into any "concept" school), the Jekyll-and-Hydeish Graham Vick, the maverick David Freeman, and Tim Albery.

But while it was all happening you noticed that Andrei Serban's Chinese *Turandot* made, and continues to make, a stronger impact than if it had been set in Bosnia, and that Moshinsky's Piero-esque, pseudo-traditional *Boccacchia*, with nary a machine-gun in sight, had an elemental power that transcended Alden's nightmare expressionist version. Suddenly there were no rules any more.

Is there a post-conceptual school? Albery, Vick and Jones are in their prime, Nicholas Hytner — a conceptual Doubting Thomas — remains the joker in the pack, and there is a new, gentler, earlier strain of directorial inspiration from Martin Duncan and Clare Venables. Deborah Warner is about to direct her first opera. Time — heedlessly, unfairly, cruelly — marches on.



One of the conceptual splendours of the age: David Alden's film noir production of Verdi's *A Masked Ball*, which was staged for English National Opera in 1989

HIGHS AND LOWS OF CONCEPT OPERA

Slaughterhouse Strauss

ELEKTRA in Cardiff, 1978. After Harry Kupfer's blood-spattered staging of the misfortunes of the House of Atreus, set in an expressionist abattoir and played at a fever-pitch of blood-lust and hysteria, opera in the UK was never quite the same again.

Mafioso Verdi

RIGOLETTO at the Coliseum, 1982. Still going strong (until March 12), Jonathan Miller's updating to the time and place of *The Godfather* worked perfectly, and has proved one of the most lasting and popular of "concept" stagings.

Nursery nymphs

RUSALKA, Coliseum, 1983. Dvořák's opera was premiered the year after the publication of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, and David Pountney's vision of the fairy-tale as a trauma of adolescence set in an Edwardian nursery was as powerful as it was revivable. Visually one of the most influential of postwar productions.

Fascism is fun

RIENZI, Coliseum, 1983. Wagner's early (and ghastly) opera was one of Hitler's special favourites, and Nicholas Hytner's dazzling production explored the sinister appeal of 1930s fascism with fearlessness and mordant wit. Audiences nearly fell for it.

Ukrainian chainsaw massacre

MAZEPPA, Coliseum, 1984. Ask any opera-goer what a "concept" production is, and David Alden's macabre staging of Tchaikovsky's historical opera will feature in the answer: the torture and chainsaw execution of Kochubey made an indelible, sickening impact.

Shoe-fetishism in Seville

DON GIOVANNI, Cardiff, 1984. Ruth Berghaus's abstract production of Mozart's opera — one shoe on, one shoe off, phallosymbolical swords quivering shyly — divided even individual opinion: one simultaneously loathed and was fascinated by it.

Nightmare on Stockholm Street

A MASKED BALL, Coliseum, 1989. David Alden's film noir treatment of Verdi's historical yet strangely surrealist work remains one of the apogees of "concept" production, gin-swilling mediums, chain-smoking homunculi and all: riveting and unforgettable.

Green blood

MACBETH, Coliseum, 1990. Pountney's totalitarian interpretation of Verdi's Scottish opera wielded great power — not just the green blood and the costly suburban, floral-print witches, but Barquo's samizdat typewriter as symbol of resistance: Russian audiences certainly understood that when ENO toured to Moscow and St Petersburg.

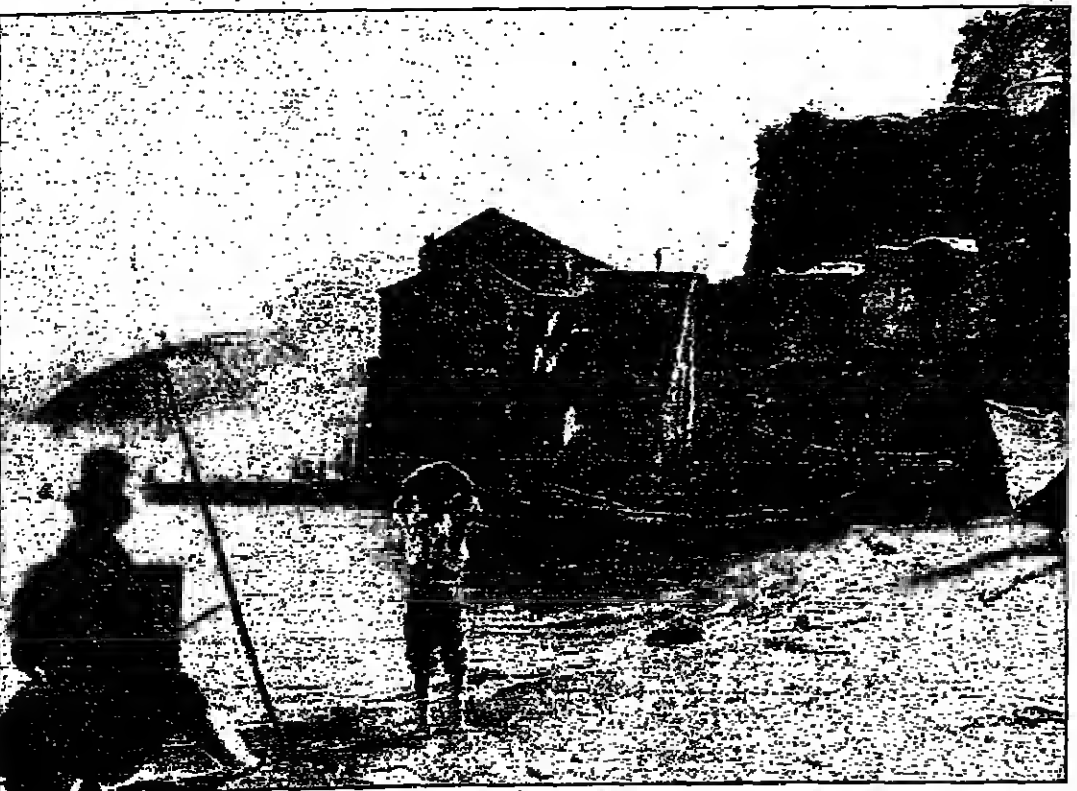
GALLERIES: John Russell Taylor admires the romantic Norwegian landscapes assembled in Manchester

From the hall of the mountain king

From his name, Thomas Fearnley sounds as though he ought to have been a minor 18th-century English landscape painter. The notion is not so far wide of the mark: he turns up in Manchester sharing an exhibition of "Romantic Landscapes from Norway" with the recognised father of Norwegian landscape, Johan Christian Dahl. Fearnley was in fact Norwegian-born, grandson of a Yorkshire trader who settled and married in the southeast: like Dahl he was a painter almost exclusively of landscape, and both men spent most of their professional lives outside their native land.

Nature's Way, the new loan show at the Whitworth Art Gallery (and then in April at the Fitzwilliam, Cambridge) is, among other things, a welcome redressing of balances. Since the end of the 19th century British attention has been focused so obsessively on Paris as the centre of everything in art that the Northern traditions have been largely ignored. Only recently has there been an access of interest in, for example, the so-called golden age of Danish art, 1800-1850, and the German Romanticism of artists like Caspar David Friedrich. Dahl, as it happens, fits into this picture in at least two ways: he was studying in Copenhagen from 1811 to 1817, and was a close friend and neighbour of Friedrich during his many subsequent years in Dresden.

Nonetheless, Dahl has a distinct and individual approach to the problems of Romantic landscape.



Prodigious talent cut short: *The Painter and the Boy*, painted by Thomas Fearnley in 1834

Whereas Friedrich sees every last blighted bough as a symbol, Dahl's feet are much more firmly on the ground. But far from making him a prosaic artist, his attitude intensifies his observation of landscape as it really is. At times, there is a hallucinatory clarity worthy of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Though Norwegians regret that he did not spend more time in Norway, he made five significant study trips back there between 1826 and 1850, and produced some striking views of Norwegian mountains and valleys. The great exhibition pieces were as a rule painted in the studio, but the

drawings and small oil studies shown here have the freshness and immediacy of working on the spot. Indeed, Dahl was particularly famed for the speed and fluency of his technique, vividly attested by a tiny oil study of *Smoke from Cannon Shots*, done at 4am on Midsummer's Day 1831, only one

of three such dashed off by Dahl before the smoke from the single salvo cleared.

Fearnley, born in 1802, was the younger by 20 years. He is usually accounted Dahl's most faithful pupil, and certainly some works are similar to Dahl's, though as the organisers of this show point out, he was in fact a fully-trained professional by the time he met Dahl, and did not become a pupil until three years later. The two men were clearly bound together by friendship and a certain likeness of mind, but Fearnley was much more enterprising in his travels. Both painted in Italy. Fearnley seems to have found that thoroughly congenial while Dahl did not like it much, despite the serendipity of being close (though not too close) to Vesuvius in full eruption.

Fearnley also spent time in England, sketching in the Lake District with John West Cope, exhibiting at the Royal Academy, and helping to found the Engraving Club. Some of his detailed drawings in pencil and wash of plants and rock strata would have delighted Ruskin, and his death at the age of 40, on the brink of a period which would have been particularly appreciative of his talents, looks like a sad loss. However, there is enough on show here to ensure that he remains a known Norwegian rather than an apparently unknown Englishman.

● *Nature's Way*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Oxford Road, Manchester (061-273 4865) Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (Thurs to 9pm), to March 27

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THE ARDITI SCHOENBERG CYCLE

Rambert the Bruce

The appointment of Christopher Bruce as artistic director of a company in transition could change the face of British dance, John Percival reports

Christopher Bruce, the former leading dancer and associate choreographer of Rambert Dance Company, was named yesterday as the company's new artistic director. He succeeds Richard Alston, who left suddenly following a review of policies by the board in December.

Following English National Ballet's announcement on Monday of Derek Deane to replace Ivan Nagy as its new artistic director, and London Contemporary Dance Theatre's submission to the Arts Council of detailed proposals for its future organisation and leadership, all three major London-based touring dance companies have now set their guidelines for the future, although LCDT will not reveal names until May.

What is already clear, however, is that neither the LCDT nor ENB propose any fundamental shift of artistic policy, whereas Bruce's arrival at Rambert will change the map of British dance.

He intends to lead a company with creative policies like those of Rambert's great period during the late 1960s and 1970s. Under his plan, Rambert will aim to build a new audience at present neglected by British dance companies, occupying the fertile ground between classical ballet and contemporary dance.

"What's gone before has been excellent," Bruce says, "but now let's have a rethink, let's have a different kind of contemporary company."

Some rethinking was essential, it seems, because financial problems made the present policy impossible to maintain. Although it was generally felt to have great artistic merit, audience support was too small, and the Arts Council had begun to cut back its funding.

Meanwhile, Bruce had been saying for some time that this

country needed a company "that bridged the gap between classic and contemporary dance, one with a versatile group of dancers who could perform a wide range of contemporary work. There are various companies abroad that I would cite as examples of similar structure and range, one being Geneva, where I've worked a lot recently, the other being Nederlands Dans Theater. But there, I think, the similarity must end. Rambert must have its own personality, as it always has done."

"During my earlier career with Rambert, when I just wanted to dance and choreograph, I agreed to be associate director too, but gave that up after four or five years because the pressure got too much, and I felt the position was affecting my work. Directing a company was not a job that I had ever really wanted to do, but one changes, and I had come round to thinking that maybe in future I could be responsible for building something, for instance as the main house choreographer with support from a very good staff."

"Then lately I kept being bombarded with rumours that I was going to take over Rambert. I have no idea where they came from, and there was no such intention at the time. But I suppose that because of this, I began seriously to think about it after Richard's departure, but not that much, because I was busy making a new piece."

In January, Angela Scrota, Rambert's chairman, asked Bruce whether he would apply for the vacancy that was being advertised,

and "despite all my reservations, after a day or two's thought I decided I would. I don't think I would have done if it had been any other company, but Rambert seems like family. And as soon as I had decided I would apply, I started becoming very excited about the possibilities."

There were problems to his candidature, however, the first being that he already had commitments up to 1994 and beyond. "They seemed keen to have me, and willing to wait and cope with this difficult interim period," he says. "The other thing I had to tell them is that I wanted to continue with the Houson Ballet as associate choreographer. It means being away for a few weeks at a time, but I don't think it will affect my commitment to Rambert."

'What's gone before has been excellent, but now let's have a different kind of company'

Rather than cut back the size of the company to reduce costs, Bruce wants to see it a little larger — about 25 dancers against the 18 or 19 it has now. "If the quality of the work is good, it will build a public to make that size of company viable," he says.

"So I was proposing enormous changes which would present funding problems, and I also wanted a structure which would give me a little more freedom than they've been used to giving to their artistic directors. I'm prepared to put my knowledge, my energies, my works into the company. I will work damned hard for it."

"But I want to build a group of people who share the responsibility, because I think that way I'll do a better job in terms of judgement and

choreographing. The main force of the company will be towards creation, but I do want to preserve Rambert's heritage."

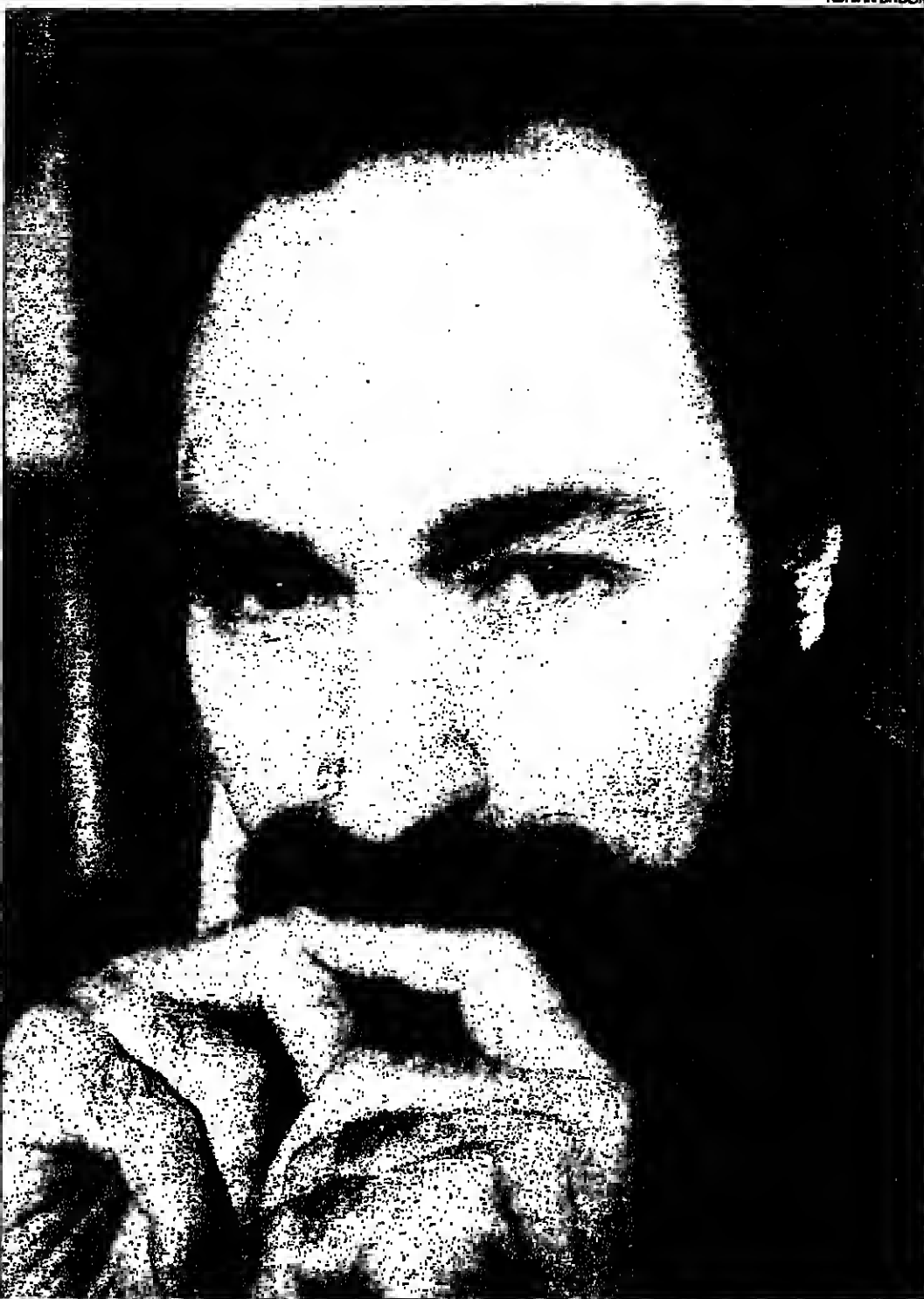
"That doesn't mean I'm going to start reviving a lot of old works, but certainly works from this recent period under Richard, because I think that has been a fantastically important part of Rambert's development. And I sincerely hope to still see Richard's and Sue's (Siobhan Davies's) work in the repertoire, although I haven't had time yet to discuss it with them."

"Obviously, it will be mixed with other influences when I bring other people in. I cannot yet name the choreographers I hope to invite, because I feel I must speak to them first. But I'll certainly bring in choreographers from outside this country if I can get them. There's a lot happening out there, and I'm very keen to show British audiences the work of certain people who interest me."

"My other aim is to do what I consider the best British work, and — what's more important than anything else — to try to nurture choreographers from within the company."

"In terms of repertoire, I hope to have a wide spectrum. I'm going to try to see that I excite, amuse, and move an audience if I can. I hope to make exciting evenings of dance that people will want to come and see."

"Now it will be a question of the Arts Council being behind the project, believing in what I want to do, and therefore supporting us properly. I'm really in their hands, I guess, but I am taking it on in faith that I'm going to get what I want, because I believe it is truly important, first for the company and secondly for dance in this country. I could be wrong, but I have a very strong instinct that I'm correct."



Christopher Bruce: "Directing a company was not a job I had ever really wanted to do, but one changes"

Tolstoy was my father figure

Growing up in an unlitary family did not stop Jay Parini becoming a novelist

When he was 18, Jay Parini wrote to Bertrand Russell from his home in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In the ten-page, single-spaced letter, he said he was coming to Britain to study and invited himself to tea with the eminent philosopher because he had "many things to discuss". Now aged 44, the novelist, award-winning poet, Pulitzer Prize short-listed critic, official biographer of John Steinbeck and grandson of an Italian immigrant gangster, says, "Russell wrote back saying, 'Were I not 97 years old and at death's door I would love to entertain you to tea. As it is we will have to wait for the next kingdom.'"

Parini is in Britain partly to promote his new novel, the critically acclaimed *The Last Station*, about Tolstoy's last year, and partly to check out Oxford where, from September, he will be living with his wife and two sons as a Fellow of Christ Church. An ebullient man, he numbers among his friends some of the great figures of American intellectual life, including Noam Chomsky and Gore Vidal.

"I've always searched for these 'spiritual mentors', like Gore and Noam. I have very intimate relationships with them — Gore and I are on the phone three times a week. The cheap psychology version is that I need a father-figure because I have never been satisfied I was a proper son. My own father was totally non-literary so I could never get really close to him. In many ways I wished my father had been Bertrand Russell, or Robert Frost."

In his search for father-figures, it is hardly surprising that Parini should alight at Tolstoy, a paternalistic giant. *The Last Station* tells the story



Jay Parini: his novel *The Last Station* is to be filmed

of the 62-year-old Tolstoy's last year from a number of viewpoints, including those of his wife Sonya, his daughter Sasha and his secretary Bulgakov. It is a deceptively simple novel. "I was going to do it from Bulgakov's point of view and then I discovered there were 15 other diarists all living at Tolstoy's house in his final year. So I thought I'd do it as a cubist novel, a mobile that would hang there and turn in the wind."

'I have always searched for these spiritual mentors'

He took his lead from Vidal's historical novel *Lincoln*. "Not that the books are at all similar," he says. "Gore is a very realistic writer, he writes about the great events, whereas I would rather write about what was going on in the kitchen. But we both believe there is a new kind of historical novel where a historical figure is at the centre, not at the periphery, as he would be in Walter Scott — or even Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, where Napoleon struts on for three pages then struts off."

Although he felt a distance from his father, Parini's second novel, *The Patch Boys*, written in the mid-1980s, was based on his father's experiences of growing up in an immigrant family in Pennsylvania as the son of a petty gangster, with three gangster brothers. "My grandfather would do petty robberies," Parini says. "My father went away from all that, he got an education and became a successful businessman."

Although Parini's home was

non-literary, he devoured Emerson, Russell and Frost as a teenager. He began writing poetry when he was ten and his first published work was a book of poems in 1980, however, he switched from poetry to novel writing with his debut novel, *The Love Run*. Francis Ford Coppola commissioned Parini to write a screenplay based on his book. It came to nothing, as did other screenplays which he wrote in subsequent years. Until now, that is.

The Last Station is to be made into a film produced by David Brown, funded by the Canadian Film Board, and starring Angelica Huston and Anthony Quinn. Quinn, now aged 78, invited Parini to write a film version of his novel in which the Mexican-born actor would play the lead. Was Parini not worried about what the man who played Zorba might do to his novel?

"Sure, I was worried it was going to become Zorba the Russian. At our very first meeting, Quinn said, 'Now Jay, the film opens with my big 82nd birthday banquet. They start doing these Cossack dances. I sit there, then sweep everything off the table, leap on to it and start to dance.'"

Parini pauses. "You can imagine how my heart sank. When I said that wouldn't be quite right, that this is a dying man, Quinn said: 'I'm paying the bill and we're doing it my way.' So, for the money and the experience of working with such a charismatic and active man," Parini agreed to write the script.

Parini is remarkably relaxed about how his book may look on screen. "I entertain no illusions about the prospects for my book. But if the movie comes out, no matter how bad, it will help the sale of the novel in paperback... And hope always springs eternal."

PETER GUTTRIDGE

● *The Last Station* is published by HarperCollins (£14.99)

TELEVISION REVIEW: The soldiers fed LSD by their country fall in for *First Tuesday*

Compassion fails the acid test

Forget compassion fatigue; the new danger is guilt overload. Worried by Bosnia? Thrown into despair by the unemployment statistics? Then don't watch television, where the unspoken message is that everything awful that ever happened in the world is your fault.

Last night's *First Tuesday* on ITV provided a good example. Between 1955 and 1975, the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland was the setting for experiments in which conscripts in the US Army were used as guinea-pigs in a series of tests. These included dosing the GIs with LSD and other psychotropic drugs, and watching the results.

While young men in ordinary life were scouring the dark corners of American cities and risking a jail sentence to buy LSD, their counterparts in the army were getting it for nothing on Uncle Sam.

Were they pleased? Not at all, to judge by the selection interviewed by

First Tuesday. Several said their lives had been ruined by the experiments, and the secrecy under which they had been conducted. One, who later rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, said: "I served twice in Vietnam. I have never had anything that was so terrifying as that experience with LSD. I thought I was going crazy, but I didn't know what crazy was."

It was reprehensible, of course, to give drugs to enlisted men without getting informed consent. But is there any reason why any of us here should feel bad about a research programme launched by a foreign army with no British involvement and concluded nearly 18 years ago? If the tests had produced any interesting or worthwhile results, the film might have been justified, but all we were asked to do was share vicariously in the broken lives of the men who felt their patriotism had been betrayed. Worse things happen at sea, I kept muttering. Old hits of flickery film showed men

on LSD trying to march, or subtract seven from 92 in their heads. All they told me was that not only could the US Army not design a sensible study, they couldn't even take a decent film of it. Most of the pictures were barely fit for *You've Been Framed*.

Even the shots of long-faced senators asking questions had an archival quality, and no wonder. The Senate enquiry took place in 1975. Have we so few skeletons in our own cupboard that we need to go rattling around in other people's? No decent evidence was even presented to show that the effects the men claimed were really the result of the tests they had undergone.

More than 7,000 men passed through Edgewood Arsenal, and we saw half-a-dozen. In any group that large, it would not be difficult to find a handful who had suffered psychiatric difficulties later in life. Without seeking to defend the US Army, I don't see why

it should be found guilty on a presentation of the evidence that made no attempt at fairness.

No doubt the whole Edgewood charade is a bit of a scandal, but it's not Britain's scandal. A sense of guilt is wholly misplaced. Interest, fascination, even disbelief at the extraordinary things people get up to would be perfectly appropriate, but just don't try to pluck my heartstrings. They're broken.

This is a serious point. Human beings have only so much emotion in the bank, and far too many things to spend it on. Thrown away on issues that are way beyond our control, pretty soon there is none left for things we can influence. What remains is cynicism and a refusal to believe that anything matters; and that really is something to feel guilty about. A sense of detachment was the greatest casualty on *First Tuesday*.

NIGEL HAWKES

RADIO REVIEW: A look back at the 1920s

Roaring back to life

The best programmes so far in Radio 3's new 1920s season have been the ten-minute *Hits of the 20s* spots that went out every night last week. Best of them all was Bessie Smith, supposedly in a confectioner's shop, singing about her unrivaled skill at baking a jelly roll. For all the double entendre, there was, as George Melly said, not a trace of "judgy nudge, wink, wink" in it: it was an astonishingly heartfelt song, with sexual frustration and desolation eating away at the wit and pride.

In fact all the songs were rich with feeling — perhaps not quite what we associate with the "cold-hearted" 1920s. The singer Adelaide Hall, who performed in New York during the decade, had no doubt what a wonderful time black musicians had there, and chose her friend Ella Fitzgerald's "Lady Be Good." Philip Brady brought back a forgotten German singer, Claire Waldoff, who in 1927 sang entrancingly in one of Berlin's 100 cabarets of all the pleasures of life in the German capital then; Jerry Smith played the Red Army Ensemble singing a defiant marching song that was composed for the Whites, was stolen by the Reds on the bloody road to Vladivostok in 1922, and can still be hummed by every man, woman and child in Russia.

The English contribution reminded one that the music-hall of the 1890s was still thriving in the 1920s — and that T.S. Eliot wrote the obituary of Marie Lloyd, who died in 1922, after collapsing onstage while singing "My Old Man Said 'Follow the Van'". That was the song we heard

Genius lives again — or is done to death by the moderns — on Radio 3

in the programme, sung by her daughter Marie, Elizabeth Mansfield, who introduced it, complained persuasively about the absence in songs now of subjects like being thrown out of your house.

The literary programmes have made less impact so far. There was a good idea behind *Friday's British Novelists of the 1920s*. Extracts were played from two talks given on the subject by V.S. Pritchett in the deeply mourned era of the well-made radio talk. 40 years ago, then three critics gave their views on what he had said. But the talk was very



Bessie Smith: heartfelt

desultory. John Carey made a few judicious observations on such things as the sensitivity lurking behind the farce in Evelyn Waugh, or the way Virginia Woolf put her class prejudice into her novels but kept it out of her essays. Michele Roberts spoke up for women whenever she saw an opening. Paul Bailey elegantly redressed a few imbalances in what the other two had said.

The first two stories in this week's nightly series were also disappointing. The first, "Cynthia", was no more than a little joke for classical scholars; the second, "The Bookshop", a rather feeble lament over our need for money when we would rather have art.

There was more life in *Dancing on a Tightrope*, Richard Mayne's programme on Saturday about Jean Cocteau. Mayne had found a number of Frenchmen and women who knew him and they talked well. Cocteau came into a room like a thief fearing to be noticed; all the great artists he admired tormented him mercilessly; behind his endless preoccupation with Oedipus lay the fact that his father committed suicide when he was nine.

The programme did not really get around to assessing Cocteau's work, but it succeeded in leaving a clear impression that he was much more than the charlatan he was so often accused of being. Scepticism broke out most energetically when Cocteau, noted sybarite of the Côte d'Azur, was quoted as saying "Luxury kills". Mayne could not resist echoing Waugh and adding "Up to a point, Lord Cocteau."

DERWENT MAY

A TIMES SPECIAL READER OFFER

INVADE MY PRIVACY

At the Riverside Studios

The Times is offering readers the chance to attend the opening performance of *Invade My Privacy*, which is a musical celebration of the works of Fran Landesman.

Our Theatre Club is hosting the first-night party on March 10 at the Riverside Studios in West London.

For only £15 a ticket Times readers are offered:

- The best seats in the house
- Exclusive invitation to a post-show party to meet the cast

THE WONDERFUL poetry of Fran Landesman was first performed at the King's Head in Islington at a special charity performance. So successful was it that the King's Head box office found itself inundated with callers trying to find out when the show was next to be staged.



The poet and lyricist Fran Landesman is one of a kind. Her work combines pathos and humour and glows with tough wisdom gleaned from a lifetime of tiding in fast convertibles and hanging out in smoky bars. As an art student in New York in the 1950s she was part of the Kenouac, Ginsberg scene. Her song "The Ballad of the Sad Young Men" has been recorded by Ella Fitzgerald, Barbra Streisand and Rikki Lee Jones.

This is an excellent opportunity to see the show at the Riverside Studios, before it transfers to the West End. After the show you are invited to the backstage party to meet Fran Landesman, the cast and the director. Call the Club's booking service on 071-413 1412, quoting The Times and Sunday Times Theatre Club. If you can't make the first night, the show runs until April 3. Call the box office on 081-748 3354. Performances start at 7.45pm.

THE TIMES
THEATRE CLUB

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL
3rd, 5th & 14th March
at 7.45 pm
Van Walsum Management
presents
PAUL CROSSLEY
The complete solo
piano works of
Debussy
86, 88, 910, 912
Box Office 071-929 8800

[illegible]

Jack Waterman discovers the greater rewards available to owners a century ago



Thrill of the chase: Father O'Flynn leading a pack of pursuers at the Canal Turn in the 1892 Grand National

Decline and fall of prize-money values

In 1892, Gladstone became prime minister for the last time and Miss Lottie Collins was enlivening the music-halls with her saucy rendering of *Ta-ra-ra-Boo-dee*.

It was also a vibrant year for the turf. La Fleche, trained by John Porter at Kingsclere, won the 1,000 Guineas, Oaks and St Leger and rounded off a busy season by success under 8st 10lb in the Cambridge Stakes. A year younger, an outstanding colt in the making, Isinglass, was unbeaten in three outings including the New Stakes at Royal Ascot and the Middle Park Plate.

Few eyebrows would be raised today at the amounts they won: La Fleche took her career total to £29,068, while Isinglass netted £4,576. Nevertheless, the present generation of owners, convinced that prize-money is insufficient, will undoubtedly warm to the evidence offered by an updated view of these earnings.

According to official Bank of England figures, £1 in 1892 was equivalent to £56.33 in

1992. La Fleche's money, therefore, would be worth £1,637,400, more than twice the total of £729,455 achieved in a comparable career by the top three-year-old filly of last season, User Friendly.

The amount won by Isinglass, meanwhile, converts to £257,766. Not one of the top juvenile earners of 1992 beat this total, even though Zafonic and Pip's Pride won money abroad, while the scintillating career of Lyric Fantasy, campaigned solely in this country, yielded £211,732.

Nor are these isolated examples of decline, as the accompanying tables illustrate. Three events, in terms of updated value, were richer than any race last year.

First, the Eclipse, worth more than £500,000 to the winner, purposely designed by the go-ahead Sandown executive under Hwa Williams to put Derby money in the shade; second, the Lancashire Plate, put on by an equally thrashing Manchester management, backed by the boom in cotton exports. At a mile in Septem-

ber, this consistently attracted classic horses (and in 1892 was won by La Fleche, with her Derby conqueror, Sir Hingo, down the field).

Then came the Derby. It is true that the amount Dr Devison won last June is only ten per cent in real terms behind Sir Hugo's figure in 1892. But a look at the other classics of 1992 shows that their winners' prizes all lagged by between 45 per cent and 54 per cent.

Not, perhaps, that the majority of owners will shed many tears over this. What might interest them more is the astonishing prize-money given in 1892 for handicaps. The hard fact here is that today's top handicap, the Totum Ebor, value £72,714 to the winner, would not even reach the top ten handicaps of 1892.

These ranged from the Duke of York Stakes over a mile at Kempton, worth no less than £250,000, down to the Manchester November Handicap of £77,454 (today's

equivalent prize at Doncaster, £27,546). In between, even Leicester could put on the Royal Handicap over a mile, value £236,837.

There was, in parallel, far more prize-money for two-year-old races, and here, once more, the biggest purse of 1992, the £104,396 won by Armiger in the Racing Post Trophy, would only just scrape into the list of the 1892 top two, when Kempton again led with the £278,101 Great Breeders Produce Stakes, and the oldest juvenile race in the Calendar, the July Stakes, at £101,957, was nearly eight times as valuable as today.

Predictably, where the 1892 prize-money figures do become more familiar is on the National Hunt scene. There was no rich Cheltenham festival and certainly no jumping for good money at Ascot. Yet in the Grand National, the £94,634 taken by Father O'Flynn, ridden by the brilliant amateur, Captain Roddy Owen, stands comparison with the prize won by Party Politics last April.

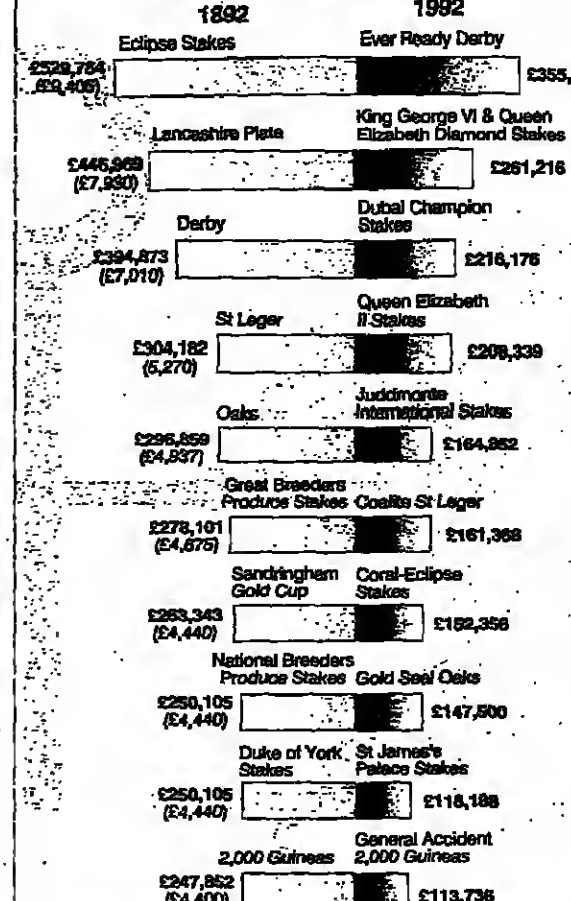
Neither was the Grand National the sole rich race. The Lancashire Chase was worth £82,000 and Sandown Park, entreprenising as ever, organised a mixed meeting in April with jumping prizes totalling £132,000, including a hunter chase worth more than £60,000.

At the other end of the scale there were many small and now defunct jumping meetings, but their money mostly compared favourably with today's equivalents. It is interesting to note that at Plumpton a century ago the average winning prize was £2,600 compared with £1,918 at a recent meeting.

Finally, Isinglass again. When he retired in 1895, his winnings added up to £58,655, a record which stood until beaten by Tulyar in the Fifties. Converted into today's terms that figure becomes a staggering £3,225,000. And that is nearly three times the £1,147,091 with which Generous heads the colts in the present domestic prize-money league.

HOW PRIZE-MONEY HAS DWINDLED IN REAL TERMS IN THE LAST 100 YEARS

THE TOP TEN RACES



All figures are winners' prize-money. Bold figures denote 1992 prize-money and equivalents with the 1892 prize-money in brackets. To obtain the 1892 equivalent, the 1992 figure has been multiplied by the Bank of England conversion rate: £1 equals £56.33.

Elsworth's title hope in demand

DAVID Elsworth's Oh So Risky continued to attract support yesterday for the Champion Hurdle. Last year's runner-up was cut four points by both Ladbrokes and William Hill, who now quote him at 12-1 and 16-1 respectively.

The backing lends backbone to Elsworth's growing optimism that Oh So Risky will get to Cheltenham. The gelding's participation was in serious doubt after he injured his back when disappointing

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: DART SOUND (3.50 Wetherby)
Next best: Fair Prospect (2.30 Worcester)

at Kempton's Christmas meeting. But Oh So Risky's stable companion Miss, ante-post favourite before disappointing at Wincanton last week, has been pushed out by Ladbrokes to 20-1.

William Hill also reported support for Richard Dunwoody's mount Flown, clipping him to 6-1 from 7-1 at Epsom. Party Politics, winner of the Grand National last season, is the 10-1 clear favourite with Hills for a successful defence.

WETHERBY

THUNDERER
1.50 Mystic Memory, 2.20 Material Girl, 2.50 WILD BRAMBLE (Nap), 3.20 Lumberjack, 3.50 Dart Sound, 4.20 Uranus Collonges, 4.50 Extra Beat.

Brian Beel: 2.20 Material Girl.

Private Handicapper's top rating: 2.00 URANUS COLLONGES.

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2.20 BRAMHAM HUNTER CHASE (Anteup: £1,632; 2m 5f) (7 runners)

- 2.20 CARNEVAL BOY 10 (10.5) M Dwyer
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- 3306 DANCE OF THE DANCING QUEEN 10-10-10 M Dwyer

2.20 BRAMHAM HUNTER CHASE (Anteup: £1,632; 2m 5f) (7 runners)

- 2.20 CARNEVAL BOY 10 (10.5) M Dwyer
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2.50 HOBST PACANOR EBF MARES NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (Qualifier: £2,480; 2m 4f 110yd) (18 runners)

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More to life than bringing up baby



Adrian Holloway meets sporting mothers who have managed to carry on competing at the highest level while also raising a family

When Fanny Blankers-Koen, at the age of 30, sprinted to four gold medals at the 1948 Olympic Games, two years after having her second child, she sent a signal to the world that motherhood need not preclude sporting success.

Yet it was another 30 years before research showing the physiological and psychological benefits of childbirth prompted east European coaches to encourage their charges to start families and then return to competition.

So it came as no surprise that when Liz McColgan won the gold medal in the 10,000 metres at the 1991 world championships in Tokyo, nine months after giving birth, she said it was nothing compared to the agony of labour, but that the experience had left her feeling stronger than before.

But when sleepless nights start to play havoc with training schedules, how do top sportswomen cope with international competition at the same time as managing a family?

Fiona Smith, 29, England's second-ranked badminton player, who has a two-year-old son, is the first Briton to make a successful return to the highest level as a singles player. Last year she won the national championship for the sixth time. "Nora Perry came back to play doubles and mixed," she says, "but singles is a hell of a lot more arduous."

Smith was Britain's most

successful competitor in any sport at the 1990 Commonwealth Games, returning from Auckland with three gold medals. Yet after enjoying the best year of her career, she failed to play in enough events to be selected for the Barcelona Olympics after having her first child, Oliver, in March 1991.

Rather than playing six days a week, Smith's practice routine is determined by the availability of babysitters and her husband, Peter, who is England's fifth-ranked singles player and is in full-time employment. She spends an average of three days a week practising on court and does fitness training at home. "I do my stretching exercises in Oliver's bedroom so I can keep an eye on him. Then I go through the rest of my workout in the garden when he's asleep after lunch. Lifting him up all day counts as my weight-training."

"Oliver is very time consuming, but he's used to me going away to play tournaments. I leave him with my mother and a good friend. Previously, badminton had ruled my life, but having a baby made me realise it isn't everything. Having said that, it still hurts just as much when I lose."

Molly Samuel, 31, has been a dominating figure in karate since the mid-1980s. The world middleweight champion enjoys the privilege, rare in modern sport, of being unchallenged in her superiority. "I'm so far above the rest of the world in terms of natural ability and professional attitude that I can be champion for as long as I want to," she said, "so I might carry on for another four or five years."

Samuel's success is the more remarkable for the fact that she has a 16-year-old daughter, Sharline. "She was six when I took up karate," Samuel says. "From the very start it was a big struggle, but I just persevered. I tried to keep my private life separate, so people were quite shocked when they realised I had a daughter."

Nine per cent of Samuel's opponents are single women without children. She has no sponsor and receives a modest



Young audience: Smith has her son, Oliver, as a spectator while maintaining the rigorous fitness routine she dare not skip

coaching income from the Sports Aid Foundation. "In 1989 I had no money coming in at all," she recalled, "and I had to do a cleaning job every day from 5am to 7am, which left me shattered. That was a low point because I'm someone who can't go to something on 50 per cent power."

"I've spent a lot of time away from Sharline. I never take her when I go abroad because that's just adding to the pressure. There's always going to be guilt in this kind of situation. You'll only ever know

when the child is grown up how much she's been affected by it. I'm very fortunate that I come from a family of nine who have been brilliant in helping look after her."

Her counterpart on the polo field, Claire Tomlinson, who until recently held the highest handicap achieved by a woman, has been marrying the twin demands of motherhood and top competition for even longer.

Her children, Emma, 18; Luke, 16, and Mark, 10, are all at boarding school, but the

conflict of interest was once keenly felt. "It all comes down to how self-centred you get," Tomlinson said. "The challenge is to be single-minded about the sport, while not allowing it to affect the children."

Yet while childbirth has merely interrupted the success of some sportswomen, others have experienced a frustrating inability to recapture former glories. Kirsty Wade is one of them. Commonwealth champion at 800 metres in 1982 and 1986, Wade went on to

win the 1,500 metres in the 1987 European Cup, yet by her own admission, she has lost her best form since taking time out to have her first child, Rachel, in 1989.

"I've never felt on top of things since then," Wade, 30, said. "I always imagined that having a baby would take me into a different phase, by moving me up a gear, but it didn't happen."

"Although I can't get back to my old racing weight, I'd say I'm still as motivated as I was before. Yet I'm totally dependent

on the goodwill of other people. I take Rachel to the gym with me, but she can't go everywhere. If my husband, Tony, wasn't totally committed to my career, there's no way I could race."

"When you have a child, some people think you're finished and that you'll never be back, but if you've got a talent, I believe you should keep on using it and take it as far as you can. That's why people like me come back. It's got nothing to do with wanting more of the old adulation."



Samuel: top of her class

RUGBY LEAGUE

Britain's hopes hang on tense evening

By Christopher Irvine

FIFTEEN of the 22 members of Great Britain's squad to meet France in Carcassonne on Sunday will be in action tonight, leaving Malcolm Reilly, the coach, keeping his fingers crossed that none of them will sustain an injury. Normally, there are regulations against selected players taking part in games close to internationals but these have been waived in view of the backlog of domestic matches.

Another consequence is that Reilly has had little time to prepare for the two matches with France, the second of which is at Headingley on April 2.

Defeat in Carcassonne, although unlikely, would be an expensive price for the follies of a congested fixture list. With Martin Offiah and David Lyon already doubtful, Reilly will be fortunate if there are no additions to the injury list tonight.

Alf Davies, Leeds's chief executive, has been fined £500 and suspended for 12 months by the Rugby Football League board of directors for "conduct likely to bring the game into disrepute" for remarks last week criticising the decision to release Great Britain players for the Stones Bitter championship match between Leeds and Wigan tonight.

The fixture, which could well be a rehearsal for the Challenge Cup final at Wembley on May 1, involves eight automatic choices for the match in France.

Davies claimed the game — postponed on the weekend Wigan won the Regal Trophy — had been hastily rearranged, but the board of directors yesterday insisted it was confirmed in writing for March 3 by Leeds.

Wigan were prepared to play without seven internationals to avoid a fixture pile-up, but the league released Britain's players in "the need to maintain the credibility of the Stones Bitter championship".

Davies stressed yesterday that his use of the term "barney" had referred to the fixture situation in general.

The Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-final replay between Wigan and Hull Kingston Rovers tonight further threatens Reilly's plans. Three of the Great Britain squad are taking part. Should Wigan win at Naughton Park, they are likely to play Leeds at either Bolton or Wigan on Saturday night. Bradford Northern must dispose of second division Oldham this evening in order to meet Wigan and would prefer the second semi-final date of March 27 in order to have Derek Fox, their match-winning scrum-half, restored to fitness.

St Helens will recover their lead in the championship should they end a three-match losing run at home to Castleford, who lie fourth. Leeds could do them a favour tonight, although Wigan would still have two games in hand.

A successful takeover of second division Swinton, which has run up debts of £600,000, was completed yesterday by Malcolm White, a former chairman, who is joined on a new two-man board by Terry Robinson, the Bury football club chairman. Swinton will remain at Gigg Lane under coach Tony Barrow, who has been appointed full-time general manager.

Coventry forced to sell Rosario

By Chris Moore

ROBERT Rosario, the Coventry City captain, signed for Nottingham Forest in a £400,000 deal yesterday.

The 6ft 4in forward plays for Forest in the Premier League relegation battle with Crystal Palace at the City Ground tonight, having played against the same opponents for Coventry in the goalless draw at Selhurst Park last Saturday.

"We have been interested in Robert since he did well against us in the game with Coventry in January," Ron Fenton, the Forest assistant manager, said. "We were then quoted a ridiculous fee by Bobby Gould, the Coventry manager, and cooled on the idea. But knowing Coventry are in financial trouble, we went back this week."

Rosario has scored only 27 league goals in his career, including eight in 58 games for Coventry, where he recently switched to a midfield role. "The Coventry chairman told

me they wanted me to go because they needed the money," he said. "They had accepted Forest's offer and that it was nothing personal. They were just short of cash."

Rosario's departure is certain to surprise Coventry supporters at a time when the club is pushing for a place in Europe next season. "We've been warring Forest off but sometimes you are forced to sell to survive," Gould said. "At the moment, I've got something of a plate-spinning job here and I'm just trying to keep as many of those plates in the air as possible."

A Coventry's annual meeting in December, their accounts for the year ending May 31, 1992, disclosed debts of over £3 million. "Things are tight and we are working very closely with the bank," Graham Hower, the club secretary, said. "But our budget on gates is up ten per cent and we look like making a working profit this year."

FA to charge Cantona after accusations of spitting

By Ian Ross

THE Football Association announced it would charge Eric Cantona, the Manchester United forward, with misconduct yesterday. The French international is accused of spitting at supporters as he made his way towards the dressing-rooms after the Premier League game against Leeds United at Elland Road on February 8.

If the case is proved, Cantona might be suspended or, more likely, fined. Ian Wright, the Arsenal forward, was fined £1,500 by an FA disciplinary committee after a spitting incident at Oldham Athletic last season.

Although several Leeds supporters contacted national newspapers in the days after the game to express their disgust at Cantona's alleged actions, the matter was not reported to the FA at the time and it was thought unlikely that charges would follow.

However, after receiving official complaints from at

least three Leeds supporters, the FA contacted West Yorkshire police a fortnight ago and asked for its observations on the alleged incident.

As a result of statements prepared and forwarded by officers who were around the players' tunnel at the final whistle, the charge was made. The FA has told the French-

man he has 14 days to request a personal hearing. In allegations came after Cantona had made his first appearance at Elland Road since his £1 million transfer from Leeds last November. He was booked in that game and begins a two-match suspension this weekend, forcing him out of contention for the Premier League games against Liverpool at Anfield on Saturday, and Oldham at Boundary Park on Tuesday.

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, said last night he would discuss the issue with player today.

"I have not decided on what action, if any, to take," he said. "Firstly, I want to look at the mail which I have received and review it. I have received a number of letters from Manchester United supporters who were in the vicinity of the players' tunnel and who say they saw nothing at all. I have yet to discuss the matter with Eric himself."



Cantona: complaints

Taylor heading for battle over US trip

By Our Sports Staff

GRAHAM Taylor is heading for a club versus country battle over England's World Cup dress rehearsal this summer. The England manager insists he must have his players available for the important US Cup tournament in June, however that is likely to upset clubs that want their players for lucrative tours.

Many expect to give England first claim on their players only in European championship and World Cup years.

But Taylor said yesterday: "The Football Association has first call on players at all levels for international duty and I am expecting their release for this tournament. There have been agreements in the past that the year after World Cups the clubs have first call as they did when we went to Australia and New Zealand in 1991."

"If that's the case you'd like to think the clubs won't have first call the year before a World Cup. But it is important

to remember the first call at all times belongs to the FA."

England takes on United States, the 1994 World Cup hosts, in Boston on June 9, Brazil in Washington on June 13 and the world champions, Germany, in Detroit on June 19, with ITV televising all matches live.

Taylor expects England to qualify and reach the last eight, at least.

ITV won exclusive coverage of the tournament as well as England's World Cup clashes in Poland on May 29 and Holland on October 13. They are hoping Gascoigne is released by Lazio to boost viewing figures: Taylor wants him there for more practical reasons.

"I saw Paul sent off this weekend and I hope that doesn't knock him back. He has a weight problem but he's working hard to maintain his physical fitness so we can enjoy his skills. I hope he will be on the plane to the USA."

New laws condemned for snuffing out creativity

HOW THE TRIES HAVE DWINDLED

Year	Matches	Total tries	Per match
1990	10	36	3.6
1991	10	36	3.6
1992	10	33	3.3
Total	30	105	3.5
1993	6	10	1.66

TRIES SCORED BY EACH COUNTRY

	England	Scotland	France	Wales	Ireland
1990	12	6	9	5	4
1991	5	7	11	3	10
1992	15	2	11	2	3
1993	1	3	5	1	0

Law changes designed to promote entertaining rugby union are having the opposite effect in the five nations' championship and are being criticised by players and officials from all sides. Statistics that show a sharp decline in the number of tries scored in the championship and a lack of creativity to produce them support the argument.

England, grand slam winners for the last two years, have suffered most. The side that scored 15 tries last season has managed one in two matches this year, and that from a penalty kick that rebounded off a post into Ian Hunter's arms. But it is the obvious decline not only in the number of tries scored but in the manner of their making that is disturbing.

Craig Chalmers, the Scottish stand-off half who plays against England at Twickenham on Saturday, said: "The change to the ruck-maul law,

Peter Bills examines the impact that the new laws covering ruck and maul are having on try-scoring in the five nations' championship

by which the defending team receives the scrum feed if the attacking side cannot win the loose ball, has enabled defence to hang off. It is a lot harder to score tries now.

"Ironically it has become easier to score tries from first-phase possession because at least the defending back row has to compete at the scrums and lineouts. In the loose they know it is safe to stand away from the ruck or maul and make extra numbers in defence. The changes reward negative sides."

Brendan Mullin, the former Irish centre who has been playing club rugby this season, agrees. "The field is now cluttered up by all these stray forwards who know it is not necessary to join the ruck

or maul," he said. "It means that if a side is well-organised defensively it can hold out against superior opposition. Wales kept out England, and Scotland, although far superior to Wales, could score only one try."

Ten tries have been scored in the six internationals this season. From an average of 3½ tries per match in the last three years, this season's figure is less than two.

Both French tries against England came from kicks ahead as did one of their two against Ireland and that which gave Wales victory at Cardiff against England. England's try against France resulted from a penalty kick hitting a post, while Scotland's against Wales came

from a lineout on the line. Only four tries have resulted from running rugby.

Geoff Cooke, the England manager, said: "I suspect the game will be damaged as a spectacle in the long-term if we stick with these rules. That is why I have asked the Rugby Football Union to help convene a meeting of the international coaches."

Scott Gibbs echoed the views. "There was some chance to run with the ball under the old laws," the Welsh centre said. "The matches have been a lot closer this year because backs running at people has become rare."

Pierre Berbizier, the French coach, was surprised by the statistics but did not agree that the new laws should be repealed. "There is going to have to be perhaps a long period of adjustment. But we have to try to make a go of it and see if we can adapt."

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs in resort	Weather	Temp °C	Last snow fall
SWITZERLAND						
Davos	70 195	good	good	cloudy	3	2/22
(Best snow at Parsenn and Jakobshorn. All lifts open)						
Grindelwald	80 140	good	hard	cloudy	3	2/22
(All lifts running, subject to winds)						
Verbier	80 320	good	good	overcast	4	2/22
(Best snow on Mont Fort glacier. All lifts operating)						
Villars	65 120	good	good	foggy	4	2/22
(Good snow. Lifts with Les Diablerets open)						
ITALY						
Bormio	55 155	new snow	new snow	snow	-1	2/3
(Much improved conditions. All lifts operating)						
Cervinia	100 220	new snow	new snow	snow	0	2/3
(Great snow. Lifts will reopen when weather improves)						
Madonna	60 150	new snow	new snow	snow	0	2/3
(Excellent conditions at Prato Lago. All lifts open)						
Sauze d'Oulx	50 105	new snow	new snow	snow	-2	2/3
(Many lifts and links closed because of strong winds)						
AUSTRIA						
Kitzbühel	35 135	good	fair	cloudy	5	2/22
(South-facing patchy. Best on upper slopes and Raital)						
Sölden	60 90	good	hard	cloudy	6	2/22
(21/22 lifts, 85% of area open. Tiefschnee glacier closed)						
St Anton	110 370	good	hard	cloudy	2	2/22
(Some of best conditions all season. All lifts open)						
FRANCE						
Chamonix	50 330	good	goodlight	snow	2	2/3
(Foehn blowing over summits. 42 lifts operating)						
Courchevel	80 220	new snow	new snow	snow	5	2/3
(Lifts closed due to strong winds. All lifts closed)						
Isola	90 140	new snow	new snow	snow	-2	2/3
(Limited skiing until grooming completed)						
Les Arcs	60 320	new snow	new snow	snow	-2	2/3
(Upper lifts closed due to winds. 40% of area open)						


Information supplied by Ski Hotline

1000

- 6.45 **Open University:** Using the Aggregate Demand and Supply Model (7/38574) 7.10 **Personality Development:** Mothers and Babies (3238512) 7.35 **An Historian at Work** (7345715)
- 8.00 **Breakfast News** (3800048)
- 8.15 **Westminster.** A round-up of business from both Houses (4046390)
- 9.00 **Daytime On Two.** Educational programmes including, for children, 9.45 **You and Me** (4861884) 1.20 **Animal Fair** (5770832) 1.35 **Dilly the Dinosaurs** (86151574)
- 9.20 **News** and weather followed by **You and Me** (i) (23740818) 2.15 **Cinema.** David Thompson discusses **Fall** by Bridget Riley, which hangs at the Tate Gallery in London (i) (23752680) 2.35 **Country Life.** John Craven and Richard Mabey look at flowers that flourish on hallowed ground (i) (96553912)
- 3.00 **News** (Ceelex) and weather (3288832) followed by **Westminster Live** (5712203) 3.50 **News** (Ceelex), regional news and weather (2727693)
- 4.00 **The Nightingale.** The nocturnal song of a nightingale, recorded during a summer night in Shropshire (2122028)
- 4.25 **Shirley Temple.** The story of the child film star who became a diplomat (2135338)
- 5.10 **Horizon:** Here Be Monsters. Mysteries of space explored by the Hubble space telescope (i) (Ceelex) (i) (942584)
- 6.00 **Shakespeare: The Alternative Factor.** Classic science-fiction drama series starring William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy (i) (Ceelex) (489338)
- 6.50 **DEF II: Reportage.** Should young people have the freedom to do what they want? (s) (140574)

Nature: Bear Necessities
BBC2, 7.30pm

One of the side-effects of the Asian invasion of western Canada, which has given Vancouver one of the biggest Chinatowns on the American continent, is a threat to the survival of the black bear. The animals are being killed for their gall, which is much prized in oriental medicines as a treatment for anything from a headache to a liver condition. On the streets of Seoul in South Korea bear gall sells for 20 times the price of heroin. The Koreans say they are only trying to help human beings get better. The Canadians are sceptical about the efficacy of gall remedies and determined to save their wildlife. The film includes horrifying footage from Korea of black bears being farmed.



Eat when hungry: Dr Cherie Martin, left (C4, 8.30pm)

Food File
Channel 4, 8.30pm

The food revolution continues as we discover the

6.00 GMTV. Today's guests include comedian Brian Crilly (6216154)

9.25 Jeopardy! Siân Jones has the answers, the contestants have to provide the questions (3150319) **9.55 London Today** (Telex) and weather (7692845)

10.00 The Time... The Place... Discussion programme (1211970)

10.35 This Morning. Magazine series (69866870)

12.10 Allsorts. For the very young (s) (8400777)

12.30 Lunchtime News (Telex) and weather (4532609)


1.05 London Today (Telex) and weather (5720241)

1.15 Home and Away. Australian family drama. (Telex) (407338) **1.45 A Country Practice.** Medical drama series set in the Australian outback (s) (406609)

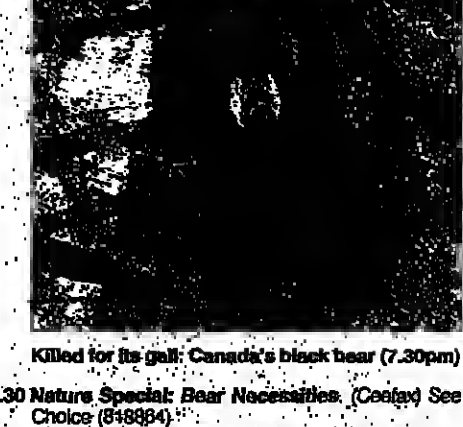
2.15 Snooker. Quarter-final action in the Wickes British Open, from the Assembly Rooms, Derby (7251899)

3.10 ITN News headlines (3206338) **3.15 London Today** (Telex) and weather (3205609) **3.20 Blockbusters.** General knowledge quiz game for teenagers, presented by Bob Holmes (9436892)

3.50 Cartoon. featuring Poley Pig (2141609) **3.55 Scooby Doo** (r) (8349970)



- 6.00 **Sesame Street.** Early learning series (1) (6643715)
- 6.45 **Dennis.** Animated adventures of a mischievous boy (19727661)
- 7.00 **The Big Breakfast** presented by Chris Evans and Gabby Rossin (47319)
- 9.00 **You Bet Your Life.** American game show (S) (47970)
- 9.30 **Schools** (133067)
- 12.00 **The Parliament Programme.** With Anne Perkins (34406)
- 12.30 **Sesame Street.** Learning fun with the Muppets (97154)
- 1.30 **Lift Off.** Children's entertainment (14600)
- 2.00 **Film: The Bowery** (1933, b/w) starring Wallace Berry and George Raft. Comedy about nval bar owners in New York's Bowery district during the 1890s. Directed by Raoul Walsh (542370)
- 3.40 **The Three Stooges** in *No Cansus, No Feeling* (b/w) (3493512)
- 4.00 **The Pulse.** A look at the government's National Health Service reforms (1) (16)
- 4.30 **Countdown.** Words and numbers game (5512680)
- 5.05 **Wednesday Weapale.** *Fauts Ya with another line* live story (2046370)
- 5.15 **Film: Norman Rockwell's Breaking Home Ties** (1987) starring Doug McKean as a college student having to come to terms with his mother's (Eve Marie Smith) terminal illness. Directed by John Wilder (5768947)
- 7.00 **Climate Report.** (Telexed) and weather (191266)
- 7.50 **Party Political Comment** from an SNP politician (609086)



Killed for its gall: Canada's black bear (7.30pm)

8.00 **The Detectives.** Last in the comedy series starring Jasper Carrott and Robert Powell as inept policemen, this week in the East and of London investigating the shooting of a prime babe. With Leslie Grantham and Barry Cryer. (Coefex) (s) (19947)

8.30 **Victoria Wood: The Library.** Victoria and her shy friend Sheila discover video dating at their local library (s). (Coefex) (19894)

9.00 **Nine O'Clock News** with Marylin Lewis. (Coefex)

9.00 **Review of the Week** with (7659)

9.30 **Filth: Filthex** (1982) starring and directed by Clint Eastwood. Slow moving espionage drama about a burnt-out Vietnam war pilot who is brought out of retirement in order to go to Moscow and steal the plans for a new superionic jet fighter. (Coefex) (20654777). Wales; Hang Up Your Brightest Colours: 10.50 Film: Filthex

11.45 **Shirley Bassey: In Concert.** The singer recorded at the Star's Desert Inn, Las Vegas (s) (239136)

12.00am **Weather** (8727051). Ends at 12.45. Wales: 1.05 Law and Order 1.50 News and weather

2.15 BBC **Select: Accountancy - Television.** Screened (859891) 3.15 **Newsnight - Newsnight.** Scotland: 2.45 (24487) 4.00-4.50 TV Extras. España's news (385883)

8.10 Bookmanic 'The Storyteller': A traditional 'story from the Walrus tribe of Brazil's Mato Grosso told by the tribal storyteller, Anuta (g) (32277)

9.00 NPA's 'Radio': 'Radio' reports to 'the' commanding general that everything at the 4077th is as normal - Klingor is seeing a psychiatrist, a prisoner-of-war becomes unhinged and a new nurse reports for duty (f) (322864)

9.25 Mr Wroe's Virgins: (Ceefed) (s) See Choice (781875)

10.30 Nightlight with Friends Stock (737067)

11.15 11.15 Show: A new magazine (s) (800683) 11.55 *Weather* (218929)

2.00 Social Science: Using Television. How television was used to raise awareness of the 1984/85 Ethiopian famine (582175). Ends at 12.55am

2.00 Nightchool TV. Debate in the classroom (23365). Ends at 4.00

VideoFax and the Video FaxCodes

The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video FaxCodes; numbers which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoFax decoder. VideoFax can be used with most video recorders. For more information on VideoFax, call 0800 557004 (call charged at 48p per minute, plus 10p per line). VideoFax is available from: Video Home, Recreation World, London W11 3JH, UK. VideoFax is a registered trademark and Video Programme are trademarks of Hammer Publishing Ltd.

Some have un-learned from violent and drunken
 Others have escaped from state care. They beg
 and steal. One little boy, only ten, admitted to being a
 male prostitute. Experts blame a Soviet regime which
 took responsibility away from parents and gave it to
 the state. Asked what he wants from life, I paid-off
 Anton replied, "A normal family." By this means means
 one who doesn't beat him and is always at home.

Mr Wroe's Virgins
BBC2, 9.25pm

Apologies are in order, I referred last week to this
 as a drama's murky photography. This was the fault of the
 preview tape and not the camera team. The
 photography is outstanding, making subtle use of
 muted browns and blues and often having the quality
 of a vintage photograph. Dramatically too, the series is
 stronger as the central engine comes nearer
 resolution. Does Mr Wroe (Jonathan Pryce), the self-
 appointed prophet of doom, really possess divine
 inspiration or is he using the fact to indulge the sins of
 his flesh? We get a bit nearer the truth this week with
 the story of the saintly Joanna (Jia Liawarasi, cast in
 the role of her namesake, Joana Southcott, as the
 seer of the second Christ child.

Peter Waymark

- 8.00 *Film: Jumpy*; Jack Fleish (1986) starring Whoopie Goldberg. A bright bank clerk in a boring job yearns, for excitement and gets embroiled with the G.I. who when she returns from Vietnam is to come in from the cold contacts her on her computer terminal. Directed by Penny Marshall. (teletext) (s) (8222)
- 9.00 *Nets on Ten* (teletext) and weather (37533) 10.30 *London Tonight* (teletext) and weather (66546)
- 10.40 *European Champions League*. Ian St John introduces highlights of the third round of matches in the European Champions League featuring Rangers against Chelsea, Porto v Milan, CSKA Moscow v Marseilles and PSV Eindhoven v Gothenburg (833880)
- 11.40 *Smoker's Action* from the Wickes British Open (876718)
- 12.30 *The Equalizer*. The first of a two-part drama in which McCall has to find Control's kidnapped daughter. Starring Edward Woodward (84907)
- 1.30 *Entertainment UK*. Weekly leisure time guide (s) (51452)
- 2.30 *The Twilight Zone: A Little Peace and Quiet*. A tale of the supernatural (44932)
- 3.00 *The Little Picture Show*. The latest video releases (s) (40175)
- 4.00 *60 Minutes*. American news magazine (t) (82297)
- 5.30 *ITV*. French soap (79926)
- 5.50 *News Morning News* (7790). Ends at 6.00

In Blackpool: Irene Marot, Vince Earl (8.00pm)

6.00 **Brookside.** Soap set in suburban Merseyside.
(Textext) (t) (3067)

8.30 **Fool File.** (Textext) (s) See Choice (2574)

9.00 **Dispatches.** See Choice (683222)

9.45 **Short and Curliest: The New Look.** An innovative working-class world of DIY with a chainsaw! (t) (Textext) (471051)

10.00 **The Golden Girls.** Part two of *Midwinter Night's Dream*. Dorothy and Miles embrace in the moonlight during Blanche's party. (Textext) (s) (35135)

10.30 **The New Statesman.** B'Stard, now in Brussels as a Senior Euro MP, seeks out bribery and corruption in order to claim his share. Starring Rik Mayall. (Textext) (s) (345556)

11.05 **ENG.** Fast-moving drama series about a Canadian television newswatcher (Textext) (s) (625863)

12.05am **Moviewatch.** Film reviews from Bristol cinema fans (t) (s) (235943)

12.35 **Film: Waagat Ki Awaz** (1989) starring Kader Khan. Hindi drama about the conflict between the underworld and the law. Directed by K. Bappiah (44611723) Ends at 3.35

HTV WALES

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legal aid; the role of the muse;	
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Oak, Incl 11.00 News	6.30
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Research at Rothamsted	7.20
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News: Sherlock Holmes: The	
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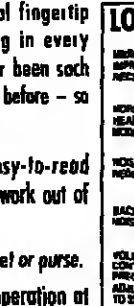
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The diagram shows a circular remote control with several labels pointing to its features:

- SIGNAL INDICATOR (top right)
- SEARCHER CONTROL (right)
- TELEPHONE AMPLIFIER (bottom right)
- NORMAL HEARING AND TELEPHONE AMPLIFIER (left)
- VOLUME CONTROLS (ADJUSTABLE TO SUIT USER) (center)
- BACKGROUND NOISE FILTER (bottom left)
- NOISE REDUCTION (left)
- NORMAL HEARING MODE (top left)
- MUSIC & IMPROVED RECEPTION (top center)

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CRICKET 36

LEWIS REVITALISED
BY TESTING TIMES
ON ENGLAND'S TOUR

SPORT

WEDNESDAY MARCH 3 1993

RUGBY UNION 38

PLAYERS BLAME NEW
LAWS FOR LACK
OF CREATIVE CHANCES

Benn seeks repeat success over former champion



Face to face: Nigel Benn gets a close-up view of Mauro Galvano, whom he meets in a World Boxing Council super-middleweight championship bout in Glasgow on Saturday. Benn controversially took the title from Galvano when the Italian was unable to continue because of a cut eye, after three rounds, in Rome last October

Old staggers entertain from new platform

BY ANDREW LONGMORE

In years to come, it will be a regular question on sporting quiz shows. Who said this of whom? "He has got involved in some things he shouldn't have done?" Graham Taylor of Paul Gascoigne? Sir Matt Busby of George Best? Almost any manager of George Best? No, actually, it was Best's description of Gascoigne or, in the prevailing vernacular on the opening night of the Best and Marsh show, Besty on Gazza.

At least Rodney Marsh — "Rodnee" as the Queens Park Rangers faithful greet him — spotted the breathtaking irony of the criticism. "Look who's talking," he said. And there was no harm done. Besty himself peddles a nice line in self-mockery these days. "I've been asked to do another autobiography, so if any of you know where I've been for the last 25 years, could you please come and see me after the show," he said.

For a time after their days of triumph at Manchester United and Queens Park Rangers respectively, Best and Marsh joined forces to transform unfashionable Fulham into the Harlem Globetrotters of the Football League. Now prompted by the success of the Botham and Richards roadshow, the pair have come together again for four evenings of chat and banter to test the water before a tour in the autumn.

At the Beck Theatre in Hayes, the water was warm enough. There is a lucrative trade in footballing nostalgia these days and Best and Marsh are just the gifted, quick-witted, devil-may-care rogues to exploit the glories of a golden age in which, Best claimed, every team had "four or five" great players. Hogwash, I suspect. But very marketable hogwash. Every ticket could have been sold twice over.

The atmosphere was part public bar at the Old Bull and Bush (Shepherd's Bush, that is), part QPR supporters reunion. Questions ranged from the bizarre,



Best self-mockery

Rangers seek point of honour

FROM DAVID MILLER
IN BRUGES



NO WONDER Barcelona, the European Cup holders, are furious with themselves. Their elimination this season before Christmas is proving costly. Rangers, one of the eight qualifiers for the quarter-final group leagues, have already made £1.5 million, though their prospects of reaching the final are at this moment not good.

Having dropped a point at home to Marseille in group A, Rangers must win both matches against Bruges, here today and on March 17, to give themselves the possibility of facing Berlusconi's unbeatable Milan in the final. Rangers will be more concerned with a point away to Marseille on April 7 than they will with the £200,000 Uefa bonus that this season goes with every point, together with £900,000 for reaching this stage.

Rangers' multi-million

-pound team, with nowadays little to play for in Scotland but pride, are intent on mounting the European pedestal occupied by Celtic in 1967. Yet a run of injuries undermines their stability here tonight against one of Europe's more dangerous opponents.

"We know we need to beat them twice," Walter Smith, Rangers manager, said yesterday. "We've had injuries before, but never so many as this prior to such an important cup-tie. The consolation for us is that Bruges, I understand, also have their problems."

Group A

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Marseille	3	1	1	0	5
Rangers	2	1	1	0	5
Bruges	1	0	1	1	2
CSKA	0	0	2	1	0

RESULTS: Bruges 1, CSKA Moscow 0; Rangers 2, Marseille 2; CSKA Moscow 0, Bruges 1; Marseille 2, Bruges 0.

FIXTURES: Today: Bruges v Rangers; CSKA Moscow v Marseille, Mar 17; Rangers v CSKA Moscow, Rangers v Bruges, Apr 7; CSKA Moscow v Bruges, Marseille v Rangers, Apr 21; Bruges v Marseille, Rangers v CSKA Moscow.

Group B

	P	W	D	L	Pts
AC Milan	2	2	0	0	6
Gothenburg	2	2	0	0	6
Endhoven	2	0	1	1	3
Ponto	2	0	1	1	3

RESULTS: AC Milan 4, IFK Gothenburg 0; Ponto 2, PSV Eindhoven 2; IFK Gothenburg 1, Ponto 0; PSV Eindhoven 1, AC Milan 2.

FIXTURES: Today: Ponto v AC Milan; PSV Eindhoven v IFK Gothenburg, Mar 17; AC Milan v Ponto, IFK Gothenburg v PSV Eindhoven, Apr 7; IFK Gothenburg v AC Milan, PSV Eindhoven v Ponto, Apr 21; AC Milan v PSV Eindhoven; Ponto v IFK Gothenburg.

With defenders Gough and Stevens, centre back and right back, left at home, Rangers' troubles deepened last night when Ferguson, a midfield player, was ruled out during training and another, Gordon, pulled up with a torn calf muscle. Additionally, Rangers are obliged to wait until today for final fitness checks on two other midfield players, Steven and Durrant, and also on Brown, another central defender. The standby in midfield is likely to be Murray.

This depressing situation is counterbalanced by the fact

that Bruges are expected to be without their defenders, Disizil, formerly with Hovved of Budapest, and Plovie, through injury, and, perhaps more significant, van der Heyden, the ubiquitous World Cup midfield player, who is suspended.

Since Marseille can be expected to beat CSKA from Moscow at home tonight, Rangers will need something special from McCoist, who has scored 46 goals this season for Rangers (43) and Scotland, if they are to remain in touch. Bruges have called up Cossey,

a tough central defender formerly with Molenbeek, to play man-for-man on Hateley.

Hugo Broos, the Bruges manager, is as much concerned with events off the field as on, by all accounts. Bruges are one of those Low Countries clubs liable to crowd disorder from organised gangs, some of which are believed to have targeted tonight's match. Uefa has sent a team of special observers, such is its concern, and Broos is worried about suspension from European competition next season.

"I shall be shaking from kick-off until the final whistle and not with worry about the football," he was reported to have said yesterday. Suspension from Europe would be a disaster, he added.

Although he is unlikely to be 100 per cent fit, Brown is expected to play, with the main concern setting out the availability of Steven and Durrant. Without them, it will be difficult for Rangers indeed, because the supply to

Hateley and McCoist would dry up in the face of Bruges's five-man midfield.

McCoist, who began his career with St Johnstone and made a less than successful sortie to Sunderland, will find the Belgian marking far more severe than he ever encounters at home but that will not surprise him, because of his experience with Scotland. The problem for Smith, in his attempt to create a team that can be dominant in Europe, is the disparity in standards between the Scottish league and the best of the rest in Europe. The team discovered what it is up against when it played Marseille, and although it would be good to see it doing well I am not optimistic about it returning home with better than a draw from this cup-tie.

Rangers must expect Bruges to score at least once and their task may be less a matter of winning the match than scoring the goals in reply. May my forecast be proved wrong.

England's players threaten walk-off

KEITH Fletcher, the England cricket manager, has warned that his players will leave the field if there is further crowd trouble in the remaining two one-day internationals here in Gwalior (Peter Ball writes).

Following the disturbances during the last match in Jamshedpur, during which a sharpened bolt was thrown at Devon Malcolm, Fletcher is meeting Cammie Smith, the match referee, and local officials to discuss security.

"The Indian authorities have got to do something, otherwise the team will come off the field very soon, and then there will be a riot,"

Fletcher said. It is a dire prospect, but if policing does not work it seems that the players have little option.

"Bihar is a lawless state," Raj Singh, the former president of the Indian board, said dismissively yesterday, rejecting any fears that Jamshedpur-style incidents would be repeated in Gwalior. Such complacency could be dangerous.

The Indian opening batsman, Navjot Sidhu, was hit by a lump of concrete here during the match against South Africa in 1991.

Lewis progresses, page 36

Harlequins to face enquiry over boots

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ALLEGATIONS that three Harlequins forwards switched their footwear illegally before the Pilkington Cup quarter-final at Waterloo last Saturday are to be investigated by the Middlesex county union.

According to Dudley Wood, the RFU secretary, the report of the referee, Stewart Piercy, implies that the players — Jason Leonard, Brian Moore and Alex Snow — did not take the field at Waterloo wearing the studs that he had earlier inspected.

If the report, which was passed by the RFU to Middlesex yesterday, is found proven,

the players face punishment, but Harlequins are contesting strongly the inference of deception on the part of their players.

After an internal investigation on Monday night, Colin Herridge, the Harlequins secretary and a member of the RFU committee, said that there was evidence that neither Moore nor Leonard had two pairs of boots with him at the match. Both borrowed boots from non-playing colleagues when required to change them after complaints by Waterloo players about the length of their studs.

Herridge added that the team manager, Jamie Salmon, would in future be respon-

sible for seeing that law four, relating to players' dress, is strictly adhered to.

The Middlesex disciplinary committee may bear in mind that two other Harlequins players, Neil Edwards and Paul Ackford, both international locks, have admitted that the use of studs longer than the regulation dimensions is far from unknown.

Ackford said on television he had used such studs after discovering them on tour in Australia, which leads one to ask how frequently players from his, or other clubs, have used them.

A case could be argued for using such studs on safety grounds. Worn by tight for-

wards they may ensure fewer collapsed scrums in wet conditions, while some observers have noticed fewer lacerations in recent seasons after the increased emphasis on players keeping their feet.

Two primary elements will concern the RFU: the breach of a regulation and intent to deceive a match official. If Middlesex find for the referee, then the players concerned could be liable to suspension though, unlike a sending-off, proof is required before such strict enforcement of a by-law.

"If proved it will be regarded as a serious breach of the regulations," Wood said.

Laws under fire, page 38

CONCRETE CROSSWORD NO 3035

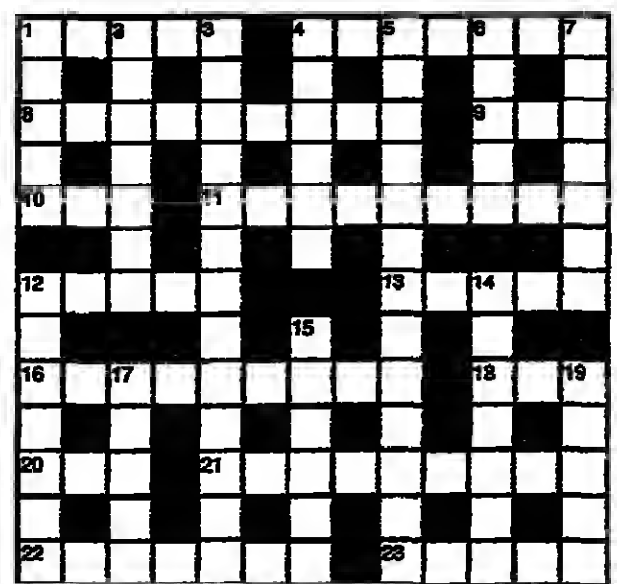
- ACROSS
- 1 Spirit bottle measure (5)
 - 4 Curt abrupt (7)
 - 8 Snare for unwary (5,4)
 - 9 Flightless Australian bird (13)
 - 10 Artificial head hair (3)
 - 11 Medication (9)
 - 12 Lodging establishment (5)
 - 13 Legal possessor (5)
 - 14 Falcion follower (9)
 - 15 Chatter (3)
 - 20 Dunch disease tree (3)
 - 21 Restrained (9)
 - 22 Temporary measure (7)
 - 23 Explet (5)
- DOWN
- 1 Cutoff lake (5)
 - 2 Deliberation (7)
 - 3 Trying to predict (7,6)
 - 4 Boundary (6)
 - 5 Irresistibly gripping (book) (13)
 - 6 Line-up (5)
 - 7 Earth's great circle (7)
 - 12 Woman party giver (7)
 - 14 Bed dress (7)
 - 15 Diocesan head (6)
 - 17 Star's brief part (5)
 - 19 Low French basin (5)

SOLUTIONS TO NO 3035

ACROSS: 1 Quorum 5 Rebuke 8 Daub 9 Near here 10 Gallop 12 Vamp 15 Whistle blower 16 Idem 17 Dure 19 Ovenware 21 Cure 22 Sponge 23 Therms

DOWN: 2 Unabashed 3 Rub 4 Monopoly 5 Rear 6 Behaviour 7 Kir 11 Last man in 13 Maelstrom 14 Obedient 18 Wake 20 VIP 21 Cue

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World champion Gary Kasparov has always cited the great champion Alexander Alekhine as his chess hero. Kasparov has said that Alekhine's combinations "came like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky". Today's position is from the game Alekhine - Kostrov, Prague 1934. Can you spot the brilliant combination with which white concluded the game? (Raymond Keene)

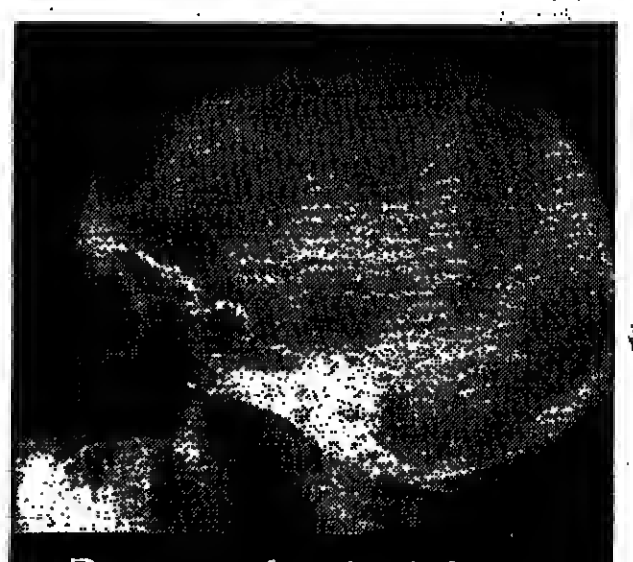
Solution on page 36.

By PHILIP HOWARD

- DEESHY
- a. Sexually attractive
 - b. A beamer at baseball
 - c. Very small
- TAMBO
- a. An inn or hostelry
 - b. A fabulous Brazilian dance
 - c. A double pulpit

LABRETIFERY

- a. The practice of wearing labrets
 - b. Iron moulding
 - c. Sexual intercourse
- PSAMMIC
- a. Like a psalm
 - b. An Assyrian judge
 - c. Living in sand
- Answers on page 36



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